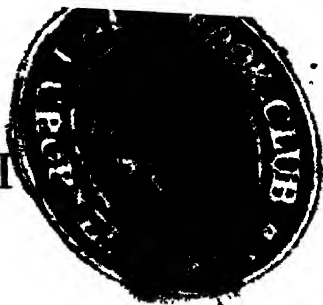








# THE SMITH



A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
THE MAID'S HUSBAND," "WEDLOCK ; OR,  
YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY."

JAC. I do not like her name.

ORI. There was no thought of pleasing you, •  
when she was christened.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, 65, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH Sq.

---

1843.



<sup>c</sup>  
**T. C. NEWBY, Printer, 65, Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square.**



# THE SMITHS,

## CHAPTER I.

“ Nature never did betray  
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,  
Through all the years of this our life, to lead  
From joy to joy ; for she can so inform  
The mind that is within us, so impress  
With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,  
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of men,  
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all  
The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb,  
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold  
Is full of blessings.”

So says Wordsworth. And so felt Henry  
Smith as he prepared to bid adieu to his home,

at that season of the year, when all was smiling but himself: and his smile, he felt, was only deferred, until he could once more find himself amid the charms he loved,—the fresh breeze playing on his brow—the soothing shadow of the tall graceful trees; this would, he knew, put all to rights, and calm down his restless mind into a steady and clear review of the exact position of things, and teach him they were not so very bad, after all, as his fevered wits would paint them, whilst free agency was left him.

It is bad enough to be in a pent up city, with the mind healthy, unembarrassed and strong; but it is worse when it is ill at ease, sore, and restless;—when the busy stir of men but further fret and perplex it—the circumscribed, pent up air, the brick and mortar mass, still more painfully pressing it down, till it bids fair to distract us, or to crush us under the very weight of its own burden;—in short, we are daily dying a regular *felo-de-se* sort of death

and no one has time to stop in their course, either to cure us, or to pity us, or even to commit us to the inquiry of a coroner's inquest.

It is then we pine to steal away—to slink off—not to die, for we think the blue heavens will do us good ;—that the green, sunny knoll will refresh us—pouring a renewed elixir of life into our veins, and bring back to us the peace we have somehow lost. We require it, and we pant for it, as the weary traveller of the desert looks out for the wished for verdant spot.

And when we find it, how do we feel then ?

Alas, alas !—

“ Was never man in this wild chace,  
Who changed his nature with his place,  
And left himself behind ? ”

We fear not : but still we must admit, that if we do die of our perplexities—and even of these it takes a powerful many to kill—it is a pleasanter death in the country than in the town :—to find the muddy incrustations which the intercourse with our fellow creature—man (and

compliment to us,) the swarms of the theatre, the club-room, and the congregate of crowds, the contentious jangling of our talk is loosened and removed; and instead, there is the flower to dress our grave, and the birds to chaunt a requiem for our souls. And this is something better than the dull—stiff—hot—cold—heartless town. We like not the pavé, even, to build us up a tomb; nor do we like the encasement of the lead: we think—and who are we? The sooner we mix again—the really earth to earth—the better it is for all parties: we have generally given quite trouble enough in our lives, the expenses of our funeral are no other advantage, (for even the compliment is paid, when the horses begin to trot home,) than to the undertaker.

But all this is a digression and irrelevant to our present purpose; for, whatever vexation our hero felt, he had no idea of disposing of himself in any way—under the ground, whose outward dress he so much more admired. But

he fancied the country ; and settled that there, at least, he could *dream* on, and lie under trees, or saunter with a book in his hand, through quiet lanes ; pausing, awhile, to contemplate the great, large sea, and listen to what with him was ever company enough, the music of the well loved birds :—

“ Sometimes a rising to the skies,  
We hear the skylark sing ;  
Sometimes all little birds that are,  
How they seem to fill the earth and air  
With their sweet jargoning.”

To one, really thinking and feeling like this, the confinement of his home—the restraint of evading his mother’s searching looks, was insupportable ; to say nothing of the crash and jingle of the street in which his father lived—the hurrying to and fro ; and in the house the bome, bome, bome, of the heavy pestle and mortar ! the very contagion of such things might teach him to abase himself still further by giving way to the uncongenial match proposed to him.

“ Oh, it is good to be with nature !” he thought, “ she teaches best what is to be done : she rebukes our fancied wants—our artificial desires : making us humble, yet high, in teaching us our own true and lofty independence. The Almighty never meant men to live in jails of any kind whatever ;—jails for the body—jails for the mind—are very far from His great purpose ; we build them up, pay for them to catch ourselves in ; He gave us instead—His own free gift—the wide expanse of the universe : to this were we born ; all the rest is our own <sup>\*</sup> doing : and a pretty mass of patchwork we have made of it ! What has man to take from man, if he would live as God likes him to live ? Nothing—we verily believe—but an example ; which is now the only thing a good man has, which he finds himself left in the undisturbed possession of.” Even the very anticipation of the country was teaching Henry Smith, to cast off the tramels, that the curious will of his uncle, and his parents’ wishes, would

inflict upon him. He was thankful now, that he knew the worst of a dependent lot : and he confessed, in his reasonable moments, the idea of the thing to be much worse than the reality : and this worst he hoped he had passed. The present income allowed him, would lead him to the summit of his views ; and if there it left him, what cared he ? One man's fortune would be as dear to him as another's ; and if his was his own seeking, so much the more welcome. His heart bounded within him. Oh, how could he ever be desponding ! He, the creature whom God had given an eye to see, an ear to hear, and a heart to love ! what justification had he ever to be despairing ? He packed his portmanteau, danced as he tried to persuade the hasp and the lock to come together, whilst the rich hopefulness of young days shone bright in his handsome face :—

“ I'll teach them,” he said, as he strapped away at his trunk, “ I'll teach them to attempt



to tie me down to a thing I do not like :  
I'll lead them a dance yet ;" and then he  
chanted :—

" Through the wood—through the wood,  
Follow and find me,  
And they that would follow,  
Must look to it well."

But he did not sing to please himself ; so he  
left that off ; his thoughts satisfied him better ;  
and he let these thoughts carry him far away  
from the foggy, close, street walking air of the  
town—the dressed up town, bedizened with  
gaudy tinsel to catch in its meshes poor weak  
flies. Pah ! how he hated it. Keenly was he  
ready to leave it all behind, and to give up  
heart and soul to sky and air, and the odour of  
the blossoms, and the tree tops waving so  
gracefully between him and the deep blue of  
heaven. At once, he promised himself, he  
would cast off all idea, and trouble himself  
not with the event that had offered to him the

road to be a rich man—if he liked. But the rub was, he did not like it. He hated it—he detested it: not the money, for he had no objection to that, with all his boasted independence and philosophy: the *distinction* in his love thus plagued itself. The thing was, he never could put up with the affront, it purposed, in bringing him a wife with it. It was so indelicate! What woman could ever consent to take him on such terms? No female, but a girl brought up at a barrack—a great, bold, staring thing—the daughter of a drummer. “God warn us! she’ll snap me up in a moment!” he said. Then he looked solemn and decided, and continued. “There is no help I fully see, but to throw the thing up. I do throw it up. It shall never enter my thoughts: it shall be as though such an alternative never had been,” and he told himself so twenty times a day: and yet each telling, brought a renewal of his trouble back to him.

When he arrived at his friend's Rectory—his “Rook's nest,” Horace Clayton was gone out to dinner.

“To dinner?” he asked repeating the servant's words. “I thought he lived in the clouds?”

The servant did not know; but this he could “zay for zertain, hur wus gone out zome 'ur.”

Henry laughed in his face: he had never heard such a *patois*—such a wizz of “z's in his life; and he should almost have suspected he had mistaken the place, had he not recognised his friend's worked slippers on the hearth rug—two great sprawling butterflies on a field of azure; these, and a black stock hanging carelessly over the back of a chair—not having forgotten his pleasant college hours—at once told him where he was: he could not be mistaken; as Launce with his dog, he knew *Crag* anywhere.

He laughed at his own conceit; and began

to look around. It was a drizzling sort of an evening in the spring ; the grass was long in the pretty garden, in the front of the house ; and a plentiful ' sprank,' as the servant would have called it, of apple and other blossoms that lie scattered on the path, gave it the appearance of snow ;—a cheerless look at all times. The trees were bursting forth in their first bright green ; but what the view might be without the garden rails, or where exactly he was, Henry Smith could not see ; for a regular Devonshire mist had chosen, that evening, to close in all around ; leaving the locality a mystery to those who did not know the place under its more favorable auspices.

But the blackbirds sung shrill, and the fire burned bright—and there was a clear thinness in the air, so much more exhilarating than that which he had left behind, that he felt himself happier at once ; and sat down in calm content to await the departure of the fog and the

coming of his friend. There were enough of books and pamphlets scattered round, to administer to his amusement; and well there were; for the hour came for bed, and he saw nothing of Horace Clayton that evening.

## CHAPTER II.

WE are all curious to see where we are, the first morning of our awaking in a new residence. And nothing can well describe the beauty of the scene that presented itself to Henry Smith on his anxiously undrawing his curtain. It is easier to paint scenery with the pencil than with the pen. What words can give the richness of that steep ravine? Ours cannot to a surety. Neither have we the heart to let it alone ;—the gay flowering gorse—the

sharp-pointed rock—the heather—the hanging woods—the graceful birch—all bending down, as though to pay homage to the bright, rippling queen of streams, gurgling its course along to the wide expanse of sea, that formed the back ground to the varied beauties of the landscape.

We have done our best : and yet we cannot see it, as Henry Smith had the extatic bliss of viewing it. The little village church, adding to the harmony of the scene ; its moss grown tower—of the Norman build—a picture in itself. The mist was gone, and the sun just rising over the hill ; and the birds were feeding their young upon the lawn—pulling up the worms, till they made Henry sick : verily, did their little bodies seem a cemetery, and their beaks a shovel ; and he was rather disgusted with his friends. So he turned his eyes away to revel amid the apple blossoms instead ; clothing the banks on each side the house ; the strawberry blossoms at their foot : and he re-

membered his friend's glowing account in his letter.

Neither had he over painted it—as most amateurs in description—are apt to do. There was nothing, as we have said, could well come up, even to the reality. And Henry Smith was perfectly satisfied that nothing could suit him so well as the rook's nest: he soon heard his friend's cheerful voice under his window; and happy was the meeting that took place between them.

And after the first greeting; the next question asked, was,

“Well, Hal, and so I hear you are come to a fortune, or are coming. I will congratulate you first, and then ask you, if it be true? Come now, no disguise; just tell me all about it.”

“Not a word,” replied Henry, somewhat flushing up, and looking distressed. “How in the world did you hear it? I have had just enough given me to pay my way: and that is



all at present. *Au reste* it is a strong hold in my confidence, you must not even attempt to unlock: for besides, that it contains nothing, but rubbish, it would pain me to divulge it, even to you."

"But there is something of truth in the report?"

"I tell you yes." And his symptoms of uneasiness seemed to redouble as he pronounced the words, "report, liar though she may be, is not quite wrong here. But come, Horace, that will do: no more questions, e'en as you love me." So seeing that he really pained his friend, and having other matters to talk about, Horace held his tongue, for the time being. In the course of the morning it broke out again. And he said, forgetting the compact,

"But the story goes, Henry, that there is a lady in the case? Just reply to this: is there not a young girl tacked in, in some way, to the income? It is strange how things come round; or are invented, perhaps you will say;

the story I hear is, and I gleaned it at college, that there is some ugly, hunch-backed woman to be thrown into the bargain."

"Oh, in pity spare me;" said Henry. "The very thought of such a thing is enough; whaugh!"

"What lies they do tell!" was Horace's reply, laughing at his evident disgust, and half apologising for his own immediate concern in the statement; "you may rest assured, I should not have mentioned it, if I had not heard it."

"Rather say dreamt it," replied his friend, making a strong effort to turn the discourse. "Where should I get a fortune, and a wife tacked to the end of it? Come—come," seeing Horace about to explain what he knew of the thing, "tell me of your party last night, and let my fortune go where it lists: a fine fellow, you, to come home at two o'clock this morning, awaking me out of the first good sleep I have had these two months. If there

is a rake in any out of the way place, that one, saving your reverend presence, is sure to be the parson of the parish." Horace gave a conscious laugh, as Henry continued, "tell me, where do you find houses to dine at—who have you near you—what are your neighbours? Pray give me a *carte du pays*—who did you meet last night?" Anything was better than the conversation falling back again upon the one hateful subject: and it was not very certain that he gave his attention to his friend as he replied to his various questions.

"I daresay to look out a head, you fancy yourself a hermit in a solitary land? but no such thing. There are lots of people around—good and true—who will be proud and happy to see you."

And here followed a description of his friends and neighbours, hit off with a gentlemanly fancy and a masterly touch. Horace explained them as composed of the same sort of beings, you will usually find in any given number of acres,

the same distance of miles from the great focus of wealth, talent and beauty—London. And we would readily give his definition here, but that people in these cases are so apt to fit the cap—not on their own heads—but to set it down complacently on that of their neighbours: and then, for the pleasure the process affords them, turn round and vilify the author for publishing personalities. To our idea of things, there is no branch of knowledge more generally neglected than that of “know thyself.” It is not taught in the schools, and all home educations utterly eschew it.

We are not going to pretend to teach it here. We prefer returning to our picturesque little nook of Sandycliff; looking down, with our bird’s eye view, as upon “the earth with men ‘upon it:’” an ant hill, where some ants carry corn, and some carry their young, and some go empty, and all to and fro, a little heap of dust.” And so it will be to the end of our chapter—to the end of our children’s chapter—

and to our children's children's chapter, and we see nothing that can, or need prevent it.

Horace Clayton liked society; but Henry Smith professed he did not: nevertheless he was always ready to listen to his friend's agreeable descriptions upon his return home from his pleasant parties. And one day he said,

"By the way; that little girl is come, the Lamberts were expecting."

"With all my heart."

"You would say so in earnest if you saw her: such a pretty little girl!"

"I hate pretty little girls," retorted his friend; "they are so consumedly fond of themselves."

"Oh, this one is no regular beauty, if you mean that. Nothing more than a little dainty red and white; good hair, and good teeth; a tolerable figure—"

"Well man, that's enough in all conscience," interrupted Henry, somewhat impatiently, "What, in the name of Venus, would you

have more? Let the girl alone, prithee, and come off with me. Look at pretty girls, if you like; give me your beautiful county! she's the nymph that I adore—a scraglio in herself.

“ In one impression by connecting force  
Of her own beauty, imaged in the heart.”

Let us be off then for a walk. I like the green fields better than your dusty carpet; the moss-covered bank, in preference to this rickety chair. Say what we will, bachelors are untidy fellows in their domestic concerns. It is better in the wild woods—nature's harem!—we need no wife there to teach us to wipe our shoes.” He looked round the room so see what else he could vilify. “ Dead, for a ducat!” poking his cane through a rent in the curtain. Then stepping to the window to extricate his stick, he said, “ And yet what a view! and what matters it after all? It is women, and all their intricate fuss, that makes the misery we find so plentifully in the world.”

“Ho, ho! hear, hear! What next?” exclaimed Horace, with a bow to the compliment paid to his household goods. “Well done, Hal! Have you finished?”

“Finished what?” he asked arousing himself from a reverie into which his last words had plunged him. “I told you nothing? ‘Thou canst not say I did it?’” For he saw Horace smile at his words, and he wished to turn their drift: and to effect this, there was nothing like a move: so he again said, “Let us be off,” and with one spring he cleared the open window; singing as he went

“I’m the gipsey king, ha, ha!  
I’m the gipsey king.”

In their stroll down the deep ravine opening to the sea, laughing and talking as they went, the one sportive, the other apostrophising all the beauties round, and protesting that Spring was the most delicate divinity in creation! the other contending he had never seen her painted

as any thing else, but as a great, coarse lass, of a hundred and fifty pounds avoirdupoise at the least ; straddling over fields, and tossing about her flowers with a very questionable sort of freedom : a lamb trotting at her feet ; and to cut off the range the fancy might take, in settling it for something else ; you see, remorselessly written under such a resemblance, in large letters the word ‘ Spring.’

As they were discussing all this, they were silenced by the sound of some voices near, just as merry as their own. Henry cast a glance round to see how he could escape out of their way : but there was but one path ; and an unexpected turn brought them immediately on a little party reposing themselves and regaling under the shade of the romantically steep hill that rose directly above them. The donkeys were browsing by the way side eating the fern ; and one, evidently a pet from the sleekness of his coat, was poking his black, velvet looking nose among a group of laughing children, eat-



ing the apples from their hands, and making attempts to get them from their open mouths, much to their mirth and amusement.

It was a pretty picture. And Henry was merely gazing on it as such, when he saw his friend doff his hat, and make his best drawing-room bow ; and the next moment he had himself to step forward, with the best grace he could get up at so short a notice, and at the request of the rural party, to be introduced to them also.

And then followed the accepting cake—drinking cider,—declining wine—and taking Portugal grapes, and all sorts of dried fruits from the children's hands. And then the almonds must be cracked. And then there was a piteous " Oh," in a very gentle voice from a young girl who had incautiously held the almond upon a flint, whilst one of the children banged down another heavy flint upon it.

" Are you hurt ?" was the general inquiry.

“Not much,” the timid reply. The next moment the suffering girl fell quietly back—just breathed the word “Oh!” and sunk in a fainting fit on the mossy bank, that pillowed her as softly as could a sofa.

Like the break up of a gipsey camp, all was in a moment in confusion; and “the gipsey king, ha, ha,!” looked, with all his coolness, just as disturbed as the rest of them. The children danced about, first on one leg, then on the other, in the way they are wont to jump in a perplexity;—doing so much, and yet nothing. The dog began to bark, and it only wanted the donkeys to bray, to complete the scene of distraction.

And all this time there lay the suffering girl. There was the stream close at hand, could any one have thought of it. Horace was the first to do so: so emptying one of the bottles of cider—to the children’s enragement and discomfiture—he went down the bank to fill it with water.

“ Good heavens, what a fool I feel !” whispered Henry reproachfully to himself. “ What is there to be done—what can I do ?”

‘ The little boy who had produced the mischief, was clasping the inanimate girl round the neck—kissing and imploring her to open her eyes ; and asking, if she were really dead, if he should be hanged ?

“ No, no,” they all exclaimed ; and Henry wished the little dog executed out of the way at the very moment, for having a thought for his own neck, whilst so pretty a victim lay, apparently, dying before him.

They had taken off her bonnet, and her long waving hair seemed to know its place, for it fell, in a moment over her face and neck, and appeared, in a modest way, to shade her from observation. The matron of the party was as bad as the boy : her bonnet was ever between the recumbent figure and Henry’s enraptured gaze ; and he wished her most cordially hanged :—“ yes”—he repeated to himself,—“ her and her clumsy son hanged together.”

“ I have a smelling bottle, I am sure, somewhere ;” said the lady looking round her, as she would have done at home, and casting an imploring glance at Henry,—“ a smelling-bottle, sir ; can you find me a, smelling-bottle ?”

“ Plague take the woman !” thought Henry, “ does she think I carry about my father’s shop with me ? Why, pitch on me to ask for a smelling bottle ?” And in a measure to creep from observation, he drew back a few more paces from the party.

Horace now approached with the bottle of water ; and hearing the request, he was off in a moment up the sharp ascent to the Rectory ; leaving Henry quite ashamed of his want of readiness to take the course that had struck his friend in the moment of such perplexity. But he could do nothing ; his sinewy legs seemed to bend under him like thread papers, and his eyes remained rivetted to the spot where reposed the fainting girl. And surely he had

never before seen so pretty a creature ! and he wondered how she could really look so pretty, as it were, in the arms of death. Her face quite pale—her eyes closed—and her hands, like a figure in marble, crossed upon her breast. Never, to his mind, had he seen so perfect—so entrancing a picture !

The smelling-bottle now arrived, for the curate was returned—out of breath---and his hand trembled most visibly as he held it to the fainting girl. What was to be done ?

“ Oh, I’m frightened—I’m frightened !” said one of the children, at once declining his request of being of assistance. The lady had gone to dip her handkerchief in the stream : so the coast being clear, Henry took the bottle from his friend’s shaking hand, and held it steadily, and kindly, though perhaps somewhat officiously close to the sufferer’s nose ;—so close, that the young lady gave a sigh—a deep heavy sigh—the respiration of which seemed to inhale the whole contents of the bottle, and

with a quick shake of her head, she suddenly opened her eyes.

Henry begged her pardon—felt confounded—tried the bottle himself—and thought it no wonder it had brought her back to life; the contents being so strong, it was like a thousand needles sniffed up at once! His eyes filled with water, and he could see nothing but his own awkward position: so with the tears rolling down his cheeks, he mentally settled, it served him right for being so consumedly busy at his own suggestion.

With the lady—the queen bee—who had now joined the party, it passed for feeling; and she said, “Console yourself, sir; our young friend is recovering.” Then turning to Horace, she continued, “Really, Mr. Clayton, you are a very clever doctor; I do not know what we should have done without you. And your friend,—he has helped as well as he could: it has been a frightful moment. Now, sit up, my love, and catch the breezes.”

Henry leant over the young lady to raise her ; and she clung to his hand ; and said in a very soft voice :

’ “ Mama, dear, are you there ? I am better now ;” and she gave a faint smile as she continued, seeming to recollect what had happened, “ you know how stupid I am !” and she then opened her eyes enquiringly, appearing to expect her mother to speak. So Henry said :—

’ “ Compose yourself, madam.” He knew not what else to say. “ Rouse yourself, madam.” That was as bad. And then he muttered to himself :—“ Devil take it all ! what ridiculous nonsense shall I utter next ?” So he walked to a distance, and from this position he watched the fluttered girl coming to herself.

And she said, “ Oh, yes—I remember now—I have been ill—sick. I am so silly ! my finger so pained me ! it was so very clumsy of me !”

And Henry listened to all this ! still rubbing

his nose, which, from the effects of the salts, yet tingled most pertinaciously : and he wondered how his friend could have hit upon such a thing—such a devil incarnate, as that salt bottle, in his bachelor's dormitory. In short he was lost in astonishment at the whole of the scene : and he would have wondered ten thousand times more—

“ And finding in the lowest deep, a lower deep ”

in his wonderment, could he have been told, that the suffering girl before him, would one day *be his wife*. Oh, how strange it would have been ! His, for better and for worse—that wax-like looking, tender young thing ! But he did not know it. He stood impatient, rather, that the scene did not draw to a close ; and was glad to see his friend pack the children on their donkeys—encouraging the queen bee—consoling the suffering girl—offering to see them home ; and all the rest that considerate people are sure to think of in the moment of



necessity. And Henry was weary of seeing all this, so often repeated ; and himself doing nothing.

And at length the little wounded hand was tied up in a handkerchief—the long, thick hair fastened with the comb—and the bonnet put on. And when all this was done, the pet donkey, with the best Spanish saddle, was led forth, and the interesting girl lifted on : and she smiled her thanks and looked ashamed and sorry for the trouble she had given. Then the adieux were made ; and the little party, in sobered mirth, filed off slowly up the hill, leaving the two friends once more alone together.

“ Many will swoon when they do look on blood,” said Horace, the first to speak, and displaying his handkerchief before his companion’s eyes— “ all wet from that poor little girl’s hand ! I’ll go wash it in the stream. ‘ Out damned spot ! ’ ” he exclaimed rubbing it with the air of a finished *blanchisseuse*, and beating

it, in the true French style, against the pebbles.

Henry fetched a sigh as he watched these queer movements, and he said ;

“ It will require a pretty share of labour—soap—and salt of lemons to get out that stain ! Come along then—leave it alone—and let us have our walk.” And again he tried to change his tone of mind by the aid of another deep drawn sigh. And he thought salt of lemons would be no bad thing, to take away his own ugly impressions of himself. It was so mortifying, what he had *not* done, that he could not bear to think of it. And he asked, bawling out to his friend, who was still down at the stream dabbling his handkerchief,

“ I say, Horace ; what a fool I looked just now, didn't I ?”

“ Can't say,” returned Horace, in a plethoric sort of voice, from his position on the bank—his feet being placed much higher than his head. Then resting a little, he continued.

"No doubt you did, my friend, look just as foolish as you say ; but I confess I had not time to see you. A very awkward accident. Suppose the girl had died ?"

Henry looked serious ; and instead of replying to the painful supposition, he sang the words of the old Scotch ballad :—

"Suppose and suppose that your Highland lad should die,  
The bagpipes should play over him, and I'd lay me down and cry.  
But it's oh, in my heart that I hope she may not die."

"*She*," repeated Horace as he wrung his handkerchief, and then shook it out to dry, "*She* ! that is pretty well, for a man who has been professing to look like nothing but a fool, with a pretty girl near him." Commend me to your blindness, master Hal ; I suspect you can see as far into a millstone, as the sharpest man in company."

## CHAPTER III.

AND the repartee and the laugh went on between the friends, as they continued their ramble over the hills : and it was strange with the easy air they had when alone—the lion front—they should become such very poor souls when in the society of women ;—blushing like school girls at every word, and in vain praying for courage to help them. Henry Smith was perfectly conscious of this unhappy failing : for besides the general leaning of youth that

way, he felt within himself that he had quite enough to be shy of. He never lost the painful recollection of the lowness of his birth. The sight of a hair dresser's shop, turned him sick. He would fight as shy of a scent bottle in any of his friends' rooms, as he would of the plague; whilst the simple inquiry of, whose soap do you use? produced on him every symptom of scarlet fever, or hydrophobia.

The principal attraction in coming to his friend had been the description of the secluded way in which he lived. Who could resist an invitation to that rocky dell? The parish consisting of a "few poor souls," as Horace had expressed it—and three or four old single ladies, 'left blooming alone,' to help him teach at the Sunday school. But he forgot also to state, that sheltered amid one of the little bays near, lay a regular Devonshire watering place;---

'Couched like a living creature, Genoa the superb!'

rejoicing in its ball-room—its band—its prome-

nade, and its gaieties: the latter, albeit, consisting of some give and take dinner parties: the rest, made up of a few ladies who would have the hardihood to leave their own fire sides, dress themselves smart, and congregate together to abuse the dullness of the season. And yet, spite of the usual failure, and the little recompence for the trouble that awaited the projectors, these evening parties would still spring up; tea and turn out, staring the persevering aspirants for pleasure, most audaciously in the face: yet persevering still; for

“Pleasures the sex, as children birds pursue,  
Still out of reach, yet never out of view.”

And it was to these parties, that Horace Clayton had proved a God send—a creature, as it were, dropped from the clouds. Handsome in his person and a gentleman in his manners—a dancer—a chess-player—a musician—and a flirt at the shortest notice; what could this little watering place desire more? and what had it

done to deserve this blessing? No one stopped to enquire. We take our good as a thing of course—a reward due to our merit : it is when the bad comes, we haggle, canvass, and protest, and think there is some mistake of the person. So invitations flocked in upon Horace from every house—tea parties—tea parties—and tea parties : he might have swam in the tea that was so generously poured out upon him.

But Horace was as shy—after a manner of his own—as we have described his friend to be : not shy of his birth or his name, for of these two things he had just reason to be proud, and he availed himself largely of the privilege. But he was shy of strangers ; and he had looked forward with pleasure to the support, he had hoped, Henry Smith would have been, under this in-pouring of invitations from a liberal and generous public :—a companion in his rambles by day—a confidant of his pleasures by night. As it was, he had no one to talk with at breakfast, over all that had

passed at the parties the evening before. It was of no avail Miss this, being the prettiest girl in the room, or Mrs. that, the most agreeable, if he had no one to tell it to. He tried to make his servant talk; but he found that he had not an idea in common: so he was glad that his friend had fixed to come down; he was a good fellow, though what the vulgar called "rum," and would put up with an extempore mutton chop at a bachelor's house, better than any man he knew; scramble over the cliffs by day, walk with him home by night, listen to his loves, and help him to look respectable and housekeeperish when Sunday came round—Sunday that seemed curtailed into a fourth day instead of a seventh, so glibly did the attentions, that were paid him, make the time pass away.

It was some surprise and disappointment to find, therefore, that his friend was as reserved in regard to the world, and more especially of the world's wife, as he had himself been when



he took possession of the Rectory ; and there existing so well an understood intimacy between them, and such good feeling, he had no chance or power of putting the slightest constraint on his movements or inclinations ; neither did it ever enter Henry's mind that he was to do anything but what he liked ; and as he did *not* like people, there was no prospect of his mixing himself up with Horace's plans or engagements.

And Horace soon found that his friend was certainly little fitted for this nether earth ; and not said with a design to exalt the qualities of his mind, or the superiority of his intelligence ; it was to express that all attention was thrown away upon him ; he did not want it, and he knew not how to be grateful for it. And yet no two rooks in their one nest, could agree better than the friends did ; though, perhaps, very varied in their natures. Henry had a refined taste and genius. Horace a good deal of industry and observation. In their

tempers, also, they were different ; this had a gay turn : the other would have been serious, if Horace would have let him. Horace looked upon reputation as a trifle---a bubble. Henry thought to attain pre-eminence and fame, by dint of his own perseverance and study. Henry was more disposed to observe than to talk. Horace talked much---he professed he loved to talk---and cared little, whether or no, it were to the purpose. He would sometimes laugh at things he esteemed ; and Henry would often seem to esteem things that he laughed at.

But Henry, the best---or worst---part of his time, lived in an ideal world of his own. He was evidently addicted to reverie, or what Horace, in *malice*, would call framing sonnets in his mind, in praises of his humpbacked divinity. It was a sore subject, and passed off with more of a frown than a smile ; or a smile so faint that Horace feared to pursue the subject, merely tampering with his secret, as a child will play with fire, for the sheer dread

and excitement of the circumstances. In one thing the friends agreed completely, and that was their love for music: and though Horace would play the quadrilles that were dancing in his mind, they were opera tunes: and not having danced them himself, they went down very well, with Henry merely exclaiming---

“Slower, Horace, slower. There again! Anna Bolena off upon the railroad.”

In books, also, they were something at odds. Horace read the works of the day---‘skim milk,’ as Henry termed them: himself indulging in few other works than those of the poets---those obsolete animals which will soon be placed with the Bamoeth and Mammoth, as having existed before the flood. These, when his deeper studies were put aside, were scarcely ever out of his hands; and he thought their dreams ‘were oracles fit to guide him through the world. Thus he saw and estimated the vapid realities of life through a very depreciating vision: he could not under-

stand the gossip that Horace brought home from his evening routs. He saw in a minute, from what he skilfully repeated and illustrated, the worst side of the human kind, the triumph at detecting a character at fault, and the exciting crush of its idle calumnies. He could hardly tolerate all the small talk conveyed to him by his friend, thus second hand, in their morning's chat.

“ I like them not, Horace, he would say, “ I care not to hear about them. The very repeating these things, not only fidgets me, but wearies me. The more I hear of the world, the less I like it. Old Mr. Lambert seems a character: talk of him if you please, *au reste* ; I like their room better than their company : tell me of none of them.”

Yet he found, guard himself as he would, there were many ways by which a man may become acquainted with the unhappy want of charity existing in the greater part of the mass of mankind ; and he must be perversely, or

perhaps, happily blind, who is not aware of it, and sees not the necessity of providing against its agency; which is oft times ready to perpetrate actions of the greatest cruelty—civilised actions—*pour l'amour de dieu*, or some such self-satisfied interpretation.

“And your friends the poets?” asked Horace, “what say you of them? Chaucer, and Shakspeare, especially, could teach you this saving knowledge, as well as the delicious *bon mots* I have the privilege of putting together for you.”

But Henry closed his perceptions against these bitter truths and warnings; and revelled only in what he called the graces of their sentiment, their lofty passion---etherial abstractions---and above all, their lovely and felicitous descriptions of nature.

And Horace saw to a dead certainty, as he expressed it, that his ascetic friend, among his other vague and wild thoughts, had invested the passion of love in particular, with every

sweet and celestial attribute. It was with him to be the perfection of life---the pre-taste of the soul's beatitude.

"Nonsense," exclaimed Horace, an expression he used when rather pleased with a subject, and yet of a contrary opinion, "Nonsense, Henry! nonsense. I say love is a very different thing from what you represent it."

"Then what is it?"

"Why, walking up and down the promenade, waiting for your heart's hope, till you fear the very lamp-posts should suspect your purpose, and ask you what you are waiting for. And then in a room, watching for every opening of the door, and listening breathlessly for the announcements. And all the while you are looking eagerly over pictures, and seem not to have a care, who comes or goes. And when she *does* come, oh, the flutter and the joy that prevails! talking at the same time, to every one else but

the one your heart dotes on, till you came near her, as though by degrees :—gracious heaven !”

“ Don’t swear, Mr. Parson.”

Horace smiled and continued, “ as though, I say, by chance, when you have seen—thought of nothing but her—she—the whole evening.”

“ Bravo, bravo ! Dante himself could not have explained it better. You are in love, Horace.”

“ God forbid !” said he violently shaking himself. “ That for me would be a bad day’s bargain. I am as much justified in flirting as any other man—fool, if you please. But love, is let me say, a serious concern. I don’t think I am in love ? A poor man’s work is never done ; and mine would be at its beginning, were that the case.”

“ At all events you do not ‘ jest at scars,’ ” observed his friend with a meaning in his tone.

“ Exactly,” replied Horace, understanding in a moment his allusion “ ex---act---ly ! now listen :—

—Then come those full confidings of the past,  
All sunshine now where all was overcast ;  
Then do they wander till the day is gone,  
Lost in each other, and when night steals on,  
Covering them round, how sweet her accents are ;  
Oh, when she turns and speaks, her voice is far,  
Far above singing ; but soon nothing stir<sup>s</sup>  
To break the silence."

"It is precisely the thing!" exclaimed Horace, seemingly most content and enthralled with his own quotation. "No words of mine, who see and feel it all, could express the thing better."

"Express what?"

"Man, you are in the seventh heaven!" He looked commiseratingly at him, "Henry you don't know what you lose ; the parties may be dull, I grant you ; but it is merely the mustard pot over the moon ; what care we for it, so that the moon is there? and sure enough there she is, in all her silent glory."

"Who?"

"Come and see, for I will not tell you. Come and tell me which is the bright constel-



lation of whom I rave. There is no right to think I am preferred; so it is my best interest to keep you at home; for such a handsome fellow as you, might well walk over the course."

"I hate your dancing belles," Henry replied carelessly, "sand bags to beat ones enthusiasm against. I am sure I should not understand them; and I can well believe they would not easily comprehend me. I should be restless, I say, among the tinkling trash of a drawing-room small talk. Oh, infinitely small! I have borne all sorts of rubs in my time; but I should be loth to bear this. I fancy a room full of company, would be to me a room full of blue devils; Legion let loose---each decked out, and exquisitely devised, with elaborate ingenuity to torment me. My spirits, you know are never very good; I could not stand it, I do assure you. Why I see plainly from the odds and ends of your discourse, you are being

drawn into a snare, headlong;—with all your warm feelings, into some heartless snare.”

“Not a bit, not one jot,” hastily interrupted Horace, cordially resenting even the bare idea. “Malignity itself, would bite its tongue off, rather than say a word against such a one as this; and human nature might be relieved from a part of its stigma, if all were like this pretty, quiet thing.”

“Thing!” said Henry. “This is coming on. What! will you give me an hour to listen to your confession? *Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*—as the Romanists say in their touching confession. Come, I see you are dying to make me your *confidant*.”

“Indeed I am not,” retorted Horace, in a measure recovering himself, “In the first place, I don’t hold with auricular confession.”

“I do,” said Henry, positively. “I think it would prevent very much of the sin of the world. I, for one, never would commit even a peccadillo, if I had to go and tell of it directly.”

It would not stop me, I can assure you,—an old priest's ear! But we are jesting over a question, which, my idea is, will become deeply practical, yet ever a delicate and complicated one, even in these days of questioning. Let us leave it, and its growing popularity, and return to our matter---the dear little lamb---that some way or another brought about our controversy. What were we saying? Oh, I think I was confessing that I had no sin---very weighty on my conscience; none, but that of reading Don Juan. That may, perhaps, be *trop forte*, at least there is a prejudice against it: you see no harm in it? neither do I; and spite of your caution, there is, I protest, nothing I do that has any harm in it, either to myself or to others. This was an attempt at turning off the impress of his friend's speech; and though he heaved a clumsy sort of sigh, it seemed little else than the effect of a tight waistcoat, or something not exactly right in the midriff: that was all, he assured his friend.

And Horace could not but confess that whatever his own immediate excitements were —his hopes and fears— he was just treading on their heels, in his discourse, to a very dull listener. Talk of people, and Henry was as obtuse as a stone wall—as thick and as heavy : of thoughts—of books—and he would examine word by word, and point by point, following up the train of reasoning with a skill and an acuteness that left the love stricken Horace very far behind him. Once set him off, really per rail, there was a spirit in his discourse most highly pleasing—an energy—a fitness ; thoughts wandering through eternity—disclaiming alliance with transience and decay—doting on the past ages—dreaming of the future.

And at these times a heavy reverie would come over him ; and there was something very touching in the way he would describe his dejection.

“ Why,” he would ask, ~~is it~~ I am so influenced by the weather ? or why do I see, hear,

smell, feel, think ? for are not all these sensations effected by the weather ? It is then no wonder : everything is affected in some way : meadows, lawns, trees, hedges, and flowers ; and so am I,—changed and altered by its influence. I, who have nothing really sad to annoy me—ungrateful wretch that I am,—really nothing, but my own perplexing thoughts, and wild fancies.”

This was easily settled ; and yet he felt so low it was impossible, even for his best sense, to get at the bottom of it—beyond his reach to explain any thing about it, but that so it was. Why should these fits be ever breaking in upon him ? Was he not the same to day as yesterday, when perhaps his spirits had been higher ? precisely. Neither better he feared, nor he should hope worse ; and yet—and yet—he was so dejected !

“ What was your father, Horace ? ” he one day abruptly asked his friend, after having watched him for some time sketching his armo-

rial bearings on some cross-barred paper, and then dotting them in with colours, evidently for some lady's tapestry work—"what was your father?"

"How do you mean?---a good man I suppose." Henry looked impatient: and his friend saw he had mistaken him, so he said, "Oh you mean his position in life? He was a reverend like myself---a worthy of the first class, I can tell you---and his father was a Bishop." There was a bitter smile passed over Henry's countenance, and he said, something accounting for it.

"No man is devoid of merit who can claim kin with a Bishop."

"But he really *was* a good man," repeated Horace, not understanding the drift, "and my mother"---

"Oh, never mind your mother; I dare say she was well enough: the world never dates a man's qualifications from his mother."

Horace stared, for his friend seemed to

him more petulant than usual, from their not pursuing the same thread of reasoning together ; neither, if he had, could he have well understood the torture it was to Henry's mind, to see him elaborately picking out the quarterings of his arms. What we have, we never know the worth of ; it is what we have *not*—the striving after this—is the rankling worm that never dies within our bosom. *Thankfulness* is the rarest ingredient the human heart pours forth. We pray for everything the anxious mind can devise ; but this is left out, because we have not *all we desire* to be thankful for.

Isaac Walton relates, “ I knew a man that had wealth and riches, and several houses, all beautiful and ready furnished, and would often trouble himself and family to be removing from one house to another ; and being asked by a friend, why he removed so often ? he replied, it was to *find content* in some of them. But his friend, knowing his temper, told him if he

would find content in any of his houses, he must *leave himself behind.*" So it seems it is an old story, for in the clever angler's day, he thus brings one forward who was as apt to think, as we do now, that our discomfort depends upon external circumstances ; and that it is from the little power of control we have over such things, that our thankfulness is put off, till they are brought under subjection ; and that fretfulness, during the process, and discontent, casting a gloom on all around, is justifiable homicide.

And serve them right, who have to bear with us in these wayward humours ; for can not we clearly trace the blame of all that goes wrong home to them,—tenderly acquitting ourselves ; and never stopping to consider how we are wasting the happiness that is so humanely thrown within our reach, and which in the ordinary course of human condition, the chances are, is so much more than we really deserve. Let every one who reads this, consider for a



moment where he stands; and look to the blessings he has, instead of to those he covets---the advantages of which might become a question. Riches, we are aware, are the grand sweeping clause. In ourselves, we never passed a pie-bald horse in our life, or breathed a wish over the merrythought of a fowl, but *money* was the object desired: and as to prayers! we are almost weary and worn out in imploring for a liberal encrease to our income.

And yet a wise man has said, that there be as many miseries *beyond riches* as on this side of them. Why then should we desire to overreach, and to see fears and cares, which a wise and benign Providence may have in mercy spared us. And yet we well know what we are all saying on reading this. What is it? That we should have no objection,—*with riches*—to try these troubles; trusting to our own sagacity to keep the money, and to outwit or elude the disagreeables attached to them.

And yet, let us ask the question, what have

we done for oursevles on this side the *pons usinorum*? and the reply, with a self accusing shake of the head, will be, very little indeed! we feel in a moment that, for what we have, we have been deficient in thankfulness, and yet we ask for more! Have we adorned the competency, which has been given us, with one grateful prayer—one contented thought? not, therefore, doing our duty (for contentment is a duty) in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us, but pointing out to Him, how very much more we are calculated to ornament a better.

Now it has been observed; it may be impossible for a man to make himself agreeable, but he may do a great deal to avoid being the contrary. And so we may not all have the proper seeds in our hearts, to set about the task of curbing our wayward wishes; but surely we have the power of sitting down, and learning the lesson to be thankful. It is very possible to govern discontent, if we set about it the right

way ; and when we fail, the patient may rest assured this right way—this road open to all eyes, and to be comprehended by all hearts,— has not been discovered, or, if discovered, slighted.

Let us preach a little more, and still look to the proper source where all knowledge is to be gained, and see, that in every action recorded of our one great Guide, there is some lesson to be learnt by man ; and indeed in the course of the whole of the sacred writings, nothing is more remarkable than the way that the history is related, so that it should not only record the incidents that occurred, but that it should serve as an example : and this might teach us, if we were not so very obtuse in this sort of learning, that in our own lives, also, every incident, if we would but turn it to account, might advance us, by the lesson derived from it, to a more perfect, and therefore thankful state. There is not the most common and every day circumstance of our existence, that

might not be made the means of improvement, if we would but reflect upon it, and derive that lesson, or that warning, which it is calculated to teach us. The punishment of sin, the reward of goodness, the Providential interference for our protection and defence, are the regular routine and course of our every day life; and these surely should teach us not to despond nor to despair; but to sing of joy and gladness, with trustfulness, and above all—thankfulness.

And this we should do, but that we prefer to shut our eyes: if we are displeased with our lot it is some pleasure to testify it. We like this better: it is much more "*fitty*," as we say in Devon, to the *inward man*:—that horrid thing, which not even the purple and fine linen with which it is clad, can scarcely make less detestable. No, it will not turn every incident to account as it ought to do, instead of going blindly forward day after day, heedless of all around from which it might derive instruction and improvement; neither to think and reflect

on our own conduct, and, as far as charity would permit, to scan and take warning by our neighbours. And then, instead of learning nothing from the warnings around us, we shall find that every day might teach us some new lesson of content, in preference to straining after every new acquisition; crowding, bustling, working, manufacturing, canvassing, electing, throwing down, building up—wishing for change every year—every day—to bring us to a position more supportable to bear, and more suitable to us the next; instead of all this, surely some new and easy lesson might be learnt, as we have said, of content, of fortitude and above all of *thankfulness*. But even this kind of instruction in our hands is not without its danger and its temptation to transgress. We fear we are not to be trusted any way; for however much might be made of it, if we were to use it correctly, the difficulty lies, in so doing when we come to judge of our own conduct, and more especially that of others; for preju-

dice and numerous passions are likely to step in, and by so doing warp and prevent our best conclusions. It is hardly necessary to say, that when such is the case, the lessons and the warnings are at an end · we are bad, and bad we are likely to remain, unless we set about our task rightly.

The care and caution, therefore, that are requisite, in the review of our own conduct, must be self-evident; and after all, it might be difficult and at times impossible, to judge it quite accurately. We can find some plausible excuse, it may be, for that which in itself is really wrong, and gloss over the fault: and when any thing better appears in our conduct, we are but too apt to exalt it into too great a share of importance. So if it be difficult to decide in our own case, much more so is it difficult to decide in that of others: for not only must it be that we are ignorant to a great extent of the motives of their actions—and this must render any

decision concerning them very doubtful—but here again human passion steps in; we like this person—dislike that one; and either of these feelings are sufficient to overthrow the unprejudiced decision which we must form of their conduct, before it can be made of use for ourselves either as an example or a warning. We are told, somewhere, of two men who in their discourse undertook to give the character of a third. The one said he was a very honest man, for he owed him a thousand obligations. The other concluded he was not; saying, he was beholden to him in no way whatever. Thus then is SELF the grand centre on which every thing turns—a sort of Queen bee, on which clings the whole strength of the hive,—the sweets and the sharps—honey one minute—the next the sting. What can we say to express the thing better? We think nothing. So we will turn to another chapter.

## CHAPTER IV.

WE have been led into the foregoing *tirade*, (which, like an east wind, we suspect will do neither man or beast any good,) from considering the position of the two friends as they sat together in their morning room—or rather their room of all work; for like the cobbler's of old, it served them for whatever they required it to be. There were other rooms in the house; but they were not furnished—neither did their emptiness cost them a care: it was not for such



things as these, that bachelors will charge themselves with one sigh ; no, it mattered little to them, that the sofa was covered with books, or taken up by the dog, who made it his headquarters,—that the tables did not shine, as they were wont to do in other people's houses,—that the arm of the favourite chair was tied together by a string ; and the mantelpiece ! what pen can describe its queer collection of things ? But as we have said, nothing of all this cost them one pang :—it was for themselves alone they sorrowed—cared—and feared.

Blessed with youth, health, good looks, and sense, (when this self was not concerned) these were the human creatures divine, who railed at their lot, in a pseudology of speech ; rated at their stars, and confessed themselves to be the most ill used mortals under heaven. And why ? Merely because the one was born a tradesman's son—for all the rest of his woes faded in the distance when once compared with this,—and the other's plaint of woe, was, that

he had seen a girl whom, (as he expressed it) he could love with a little persuasion ; and the provoking part of the story was, that neither he nor she, had the wherewithal to carry out the intention.

And yet they could laugh most merrily the one at the other, whilst distracted by their opposite emotions,—emotions that even grew worse if the day became wet : and which, during the prevalence of an influenza they had somehow picked up between them, was positively insupportable.

“ What is the feeling you have to-day, Horace ? ” asked Henry as they both, with two very long faces, watched the rain as it pattered down the windows.

“ Why I could willingly knock you down, were you so bold as to contradict me.”

“ I will not be so bold ; ” returned Henry with a forced calmness in his manner, and the same sort of forced stagnation to his nerves, a spinning top takes when it sleeps. “ I have no idea of

contributing to our social *éclat*. I have enough to do to keep my hands off from killing the cat ; it is distracting to me to see her indulging in such useless—such uncalled for frisks of vivacity. What can make us, Horace, so ferociously ill tempered ?”

This unexpected confession produced from both all the hearty mirth it deserved. “ We”—continued Henry, “ of unexceptionable morals—respectable means, and not, altogether destitute of active virtues and stirring qualities : yet somehow or another, what profit is it to be thus blest ? Will it propitiate the hearts of those who would love to see us crawl, instead of walking upright on our two legs, as we can now just manage to do, spite of our morbid acrimony ? Certainly not.”

“ Certainly not”—responded Horace. Yet his spirits were getting better, for, he added, “ And yet, I take it, they must get up pretty early in the morning who would put us down ;” answering his own reflections, whilst they tallied

in with his friends ; “ and sleep, let me tell you, with one eye open, to raise an efficient stumbling-block in *my* way. I may be mistaken ; but my little friend, with all her silence, seems to possess, I should say, not only an independent, but an enterprising disposition. At the same time, she is so very silent that I may be wrong—her looks speaking, all the while much more eloquently than other people’s words, that I do not think I am, or can be, mistaken. Is there not a charm in the enterprise that would lead a girl over the world—the breaks and the braes to follow one ? Such a one I think I have found : yes, spite of her retiring look,—and with an equal share of diffidence on my part—I think I have little else to do than to persuade her into a curate’s house, to accept his small fortune—for I suspect she has none,—get the friends’ consents—wherever they may be—and—and—marry.”

“ Umph,” sighed forth Henry ; “ not a very lively catastrophe.”

“ You would not say so seriously,” replied Horace, “ if you had seen the person I contemplate making Mrs. Clayton;” then considering a moment, he added, “ But by the bye you have seen her. Do you remember when you first came here, a pretty little girl fainting away on the grass? That is the very object of my secret admiration. She must have struck you as looking very pretty.”

“ *That* the girl?” asked Henry with much *impressement* in his tone—“ that ! you told me she was a bird of passage—merely paying a visit—yes—yes, I remember I did see her—I think so—and she left the next day—or something of the sort—I am sure you said, she was merely paying a visit.”

“ And so she is,” answered Horace, “ And that is the worst of it—here to-day, and gone to-morrow. Now if I marry her, blessed lot ! it will be here to-day—to-morrow—and for ever.”

“ She *was* very pretty,” observed Henry ; seemingly working back to his own recollec-

tions of the scene, and more intent on these recollections than in following his friend's plans. "I think I see her now, as she lay looking so like a corpse! *Very pretty!* What is she like in herself?"

"Quite a poet's picture of the creature he would love! Never says a word: but perhaps just one little one exactly to the purpose. She is besides agreeable—well bred—and cheerful. In her you have intelligence without display—grace, without affectation—form, without folly—sincerity united with dignity, and energy and independence—and all this—crouched under the most fascinating degree of diffidence, that ever fell to the share of mortal woman."

"And her name?"

"Why that, saving your presence, is not the best part of her. It is so exciting to see it over the windows of every other shop one passes. Blood, my dear fellow, cannot be starved out; but the name is not very aristocratic—confess it? I introduced you to her, you remember?"

“ Oh, yes,” hastily replied Henry, never dreaming of his own name, and ashamed to admit that he had been too diffident to hear any thing but a whiz like the roaring of waters in his ears when presented so unexpectedly to the party. “ Then it is a settled thing ? ”

“ Would to Heaven <sup>it</sup> were ! no, no ; it is still, I fear, far enough from that. I manage to meet her as often as I can ; but the Lamberts are such pokes ; and she would as soon think of flying, as going to a party without them.” . . .

“ Ay, aye, now I see why you have ever been drawing such taking pictures of the Lamberts, and their quiet primeval manners. But I thought there were some children in the case ? Have you not talked of some horrid pests of the sort ? What do you do with them ?

“ Oh, send them off to bed. They do not belong to the house. They are only imps, that rush in and out like the devils in a melo-drama to keep up the spirit of the piece. Sometimes in one's way ; and sometimes doing one a scr-

vice. I see you have mistaken *my tells*, as they call it here; it is at the Atherton's I meet the children; and oh, how tiresome they are! But my little friend will sometimes talk to them, when she will only vouchsafe a 'yes,' or a 'no,' to me; so then I listen, and drink down <sup>my</sup> *deen* thoughts of love. Were you ever in that way, Henry?"

"I should think not," was the concise reply.

"O, I forgot," said Horace, looking provokingly mysterious and significant." Not a word about the *tin kettle*. I cry your mercy."

And thus the friends, one looking one way, and the other rowing another, passed very little, but the morning, of the day together. But they thoroughly understood each other; and a joy expanded the heart of each, when the relative position of host and guest, brought them to the enjoyment of each other's company. And Henry had become a better listener than heretofore; the constant dropping of water



will wear away stone,—fire and a hammer, bend the strongest bar of iron ; and Horace seemed really by his persevering *racontes* to have worked his friend down into something more pliable and civil,—or perhaps less savage.

• There is a distinction. But be that as it may, Henry would now really say, “no,” and “yes,” in their proper places ; and “well?” and “how?” and “you were saying?” and all the rest that helps a chatterer on so happily with his story. And another thing : his lip had felt off its involuntary curl of disbelief—almost to say of contempt—when Horace would talk, nay rave of his divinity. It was natural to feel more interested in one whom he had seen : at least, so Henry passed it off in his own mind : but his feelings to himself were worried and obscure ; and when he would take a dive at them, not liking to carry about with him sensations he neither relished nor understood, they would fade into nothing—die away—seeming to baffle his research.

“Plague take it!” he would exclaim to himself in these moments, “one may live, I see, in a wood, till one is scared by an owl.” And then he would forget all about it, till again called upon to listen to the discussions of his friend.

It had, however, one effect in him, and which he could not conceal from himself; it had induced him to look into this self, and to question it; and it made him feel even more forlorn in the world than ever—a mushroom sprung up from a dunghill, and standing now out by himself in this world to be again trodden under foot. And Horace was continually bringing him solicitations from the families he mixed with to join their parties.

Should he or should he not? “No!” It was said with a stentorian voice—a growl of decision, hardly suited to the cause. And then he vowed a bitter vow, that he would take care the world did not throw his low estate in his teeth; to cut it, to save it the trouble of cutting

him—to have—whatever the temptation—nothing at all to do with it.

So he took upon himself the office of pitying Horace, who was now rarely at home but at such times when he could not be visiting; trying his best to seduce his friend into doing the same. To which he one day replied:—

“ Horace, you seem to think me a miserable, misguided wretch, because I prefer the shades and my own thoughts, to the pleasures you recount, that are to be found among people, who, I wager, care not for you when your back is turned: and if so, what would they care for me ?”

“ Oh, humph !” returned Horace, in a voice which was intended to place his friend many degrees above him in the estimation of the circle he frequented—a sort of complimentary voice. But Henry would have nought to do with it. He was firm, and he said—

“ You pity me, my friend,—my bad taste, and my misconception of things; but do not

waste it, for if there is any pity to be in the case, it is *you* who are the mistaken object to be pitied."

Now there was more in this speech than Henry had been aware of: and he was sorry that he had, in broaching his own opinions, said so much, when he saw the woful expression of face it called forth from his friend, who replied in a low and sepulchral tone—

"I *am* wretched, Henry, and you are right—right in what you say to me, and right in yourself keeping from temptation. Why, what do you think?" and here he lowered his voice to the awful tone of a whisper—"what do you think? Oh, you cannot guess in a thousand years!" He then prepared himself to speak quick, to get the painful subject over. "Why, last night, Mrs. Lambert told me in very plain terms, not to be misunderstood, that that little young thing, who is staying with her, is engaged to be married!"

“What!” exclaimed Henry, in little less of consternation, “what!”

“Well may you feel surprised, my dear fellow,” for all people are generally so very tender when they are in trouble, “but really, my dear Hal, it is the case. In the coolest way in the world, it just fell out of her mouth, without any volcano, or any earth-like sort of eruption; and which you seem to think,” with a smile in spite of himself, “would have been no amendment to the case. Yes, my lady, in the coolest way in the world, just lets out, that my divinity—my little epitome of perfection—sweet Bessie Smith—is engaged to be married!”

Yes, gentle reader, for all readers are apostrophised as gentle---(and the critics?)---yes, it really was Bessie Smith, the simple heroine of our tale, who had gained the notice of the volatile Horace Clayton; and who had, by her mild, quiet, and unpretending ways, left it for his imagination to settle that she was

all his fancy ever could paint—his heart well desire.

• It is our opinion, that a girl who will dress well and *hold her tongue*, may gain any rank she aspires to. Bessie aspired to nothing: and the way she achieved her honors, must therefore have been, by leaving so much room for the imagination to have its full play in those who had the pleasure of her acquaintance. No government is effective in which *imagination* has not her work to do; for when we decide the matter for ourselves—draw out our own *programme*—we know our own tastes, and settle things so exactly to suit us, there is little chance of escape being left for the entranced heart. It may be a fancy fabric it is true, that we have built; but while it lasts it is as potent as the rest. “If there be such a thing as happiness,” says Francis Xavier, “if there be such a thing, it is but as the checkered sunshine of a vernal day.” If there be such a thing as love, what then? Our business is

with Bessie Smith, so we will leave the question for others to answer.

She is now brought before our readers in a very different point of view to that in which they last heard of her; yet still Bessie was the same. The same child-like diffidence in her own opinions—the same sober gaiety in her manners—the confiding simplicity—the absence of mind when most depended on for her steadiness—the same quality of goodness—and that quality excellent in its kind: there was the absence of all pretension, all coquetry: that total surrender of her own feelings, comforts, and interests where another was concerned—the same softness of temper which nothing could ruffle—the warm kindness which nothing could chill—the equanimity which nothing could disturb—the happy cheerfulness which nothing could subdue.

And all this expressed in so few words! How strange it seemed to every one that Bessie should not tell them what she thought!

and when she did speak, every one would listen—a pin might be heard to fall. And then she would seem to enquire what had occasioned the silence? blush—look a little frightened—and cease in her discourse. If no one else would talk, she could not; so there was no chance for her; for no one would say a word when Bessie Smith was speaking.

We think we have explained enough to prevent, from having given Bessie two lovers already, that the heart is commonly reached not so securely through the reason, as through the imagination. We wish it so to be understood that this is our impression.

‘ This man with lime and rough cast doth present  
Wall.”

We hope it is not quite so bad as that; but it really is so much easier to feel than to express, that would we had a “ wall ” to walk in, and to explain what we wish to say; and to shew, how little is done by the testimony of facts. how much, in impressions worked up



by the imagination. Conclusions influence us, thoughts melt us, fancies subdue us, hopes consume us. Many a one will live and die upon a conception; few consent to be a martyr for a conclusion.

But it was to achieve nothing of all this—to gain power in no legerdemain way, that Bessie conducted herself as she did; it was the manner her mother seemed to have given her, in saving her all trouble either of acting or of thought. Whatever her powers were they had never been called forth: and yet, like the perfumed flower, smelling all the sweeter for their crushing.

We have now to follow her to the residence of her friends; missing her mother at every turn, and feeling so helpless—“so stupid:” so not knowing what to do, and no one *now* at her elbow to help her or direct her. And even the “now” cost Bessie a little quiet tear; for Bessie was often very pathetic, and no one suspected it. She had been tutored to conceal her feelings: “Conceal your vexation,” was her mother’s

text, "for in concealing them you evade them." And Bessie, not exactly defining what vexations were, took to the "round Robin" of concealing all; so there were no ebullitions—no bursting out: her frettings and her rejoicings were all kept to herself. No one knew of them: and if they were guessed at—it was left to the work of the *imagination*.

## CHAPTER V.

' When did I see thee so put down?'

TWELFTH NIGHT

We will now come a little closer to Bessie, and say a word of the friends with whom she was domesticating. Mr Lambert had been a schoolmaster the best part of his days. First as an teacher, and then the potent proprietor of a select academy for young gentlemen. He had now retired upon a genteel income, the reward of his weary toil; and with a very good roof

over his head, covering the vacated rooms of the boys, set himself down to enjoy in repose the remainder of his life: blessed with a wife, who, by her frugal course, and the aid of a shrill voice, had helped him to scrape together, in spite of bad debts and the boa-constrictor appetite of the boys, a sufficiency to gild, as he expressed it, the evening of his days.

But habits, once assumed, can not easily be laid aside; and although their occupation was no more, yet Mr. and Mrs. Lambert were the school-master, and school-mistress still; as all who approached them felt, and were ready to testify.

It has been asked, why are we never quite at ease in the presence of a school-master? because we are every moment brought to the consciousness that he is not quite at ease in ours. He comes like Gulliver from among his little people, and he cannot fit the stature of his understanding to yours: besides he is laying wait to detect faults. If you venture upon a

smart observation before him, he is canvassing its merit, instead of replying to it as we expect; and will then point out how much better it might have been said, instead of taking it as we had anticipated. He cannot meet you in the Square, for he is so used to teaching—his mind so worked to a note of interrogation—that he wants ever to be teaching you. So is he under the restraints of a formal and dictative hypocrisy in company, as a clergyman is under a moral one. He can no more let his intellect loose in society than the other can his inclinations. He is forlorn among his coevals; his juniors cannot be his friends. It is *infra dig* to offer a positive opinion within ear shot of a dominie—everything is referred to him—what he is likely to know—and what it is not even probable that he does know; no one would so much as make a pudding in his presence, without consulting him as to the ingredients. And he feels this—painfully feels it; but puts a good face upon it, like the Horse Guards' clock, by

which every one may safely set their watches. So Mr. Lambert was allowed to play about wherever he went as a whale might be supposed to do in shallow water, very much to the discomfort of all the little fishes that chanced to keep company with him; proposing, what sounded like, ~~very~~ like indeed, abstruse subjects; knowing, it "taken on the hip," how easily people were scared out of their seven senses; replying to them himself, and when he had in his mighty flights left his hearers looking as dizzy as spinning devises, he would give a satisfied smile, and say—

"Eh, Miss Bessie Smith, is it not so? let us hear by all means, what you are thinking about it."

And he was just the kind of person to suit Bessie, for though he asked the question, yet with the tact that such as Bessie have, she saw in a moment that he did not expect her to answer it. His wife would have been very much surprised, and no doubt touching the

indignant, if she had: for with an irritable jerk of her head, she had no idea of any one finding an answer to give Mr. Lambert.

How he had gained the ascendancy, would have been a secret worth knowing to many a husband; but not a word he uttered was ever lost upon her; and she would sit listening to him with a satisfaction depicted in her mouth curious to behold, considering the circumstances that drew it forth; her eyes fixed upon her work: and as he spoke she turned her mouth up and down with the lips closed, in the same way that people will move their hands in token of approval and applause—a living note of admiration.

No one, indeed, was impressed with so high a respect and admiration for Mr. Lambert's talents as his wife. She called him "sir," allowed him to wear his hat in the room, for he had been in the habit of doing so in the school with the boys, as a sort of crown, or Lord Chancellor's wig: and when they walked

together he leant on her arm, instead of she on his. She was not only a very inferior sort of creature, compared with him; but she made it her duty to show herself so; following after him—helping him first; she did not exactly wipe his shoes, but she stood patiently by on the coldest day, till he had gone through the operation; and saw him well housed himself, before she even attempted to follow his example. All this took place when the *ci devant* school-master was present; him once away, she seemed her husband in petticoats.

And this was the effect of school discipline, and nothing else, the day after day dictating to, and keeping in order a set of boys. “Hold up your head, sir,” and in a moment the master’s and mistress’s back were as stiff as a poker. In every other respect they were the kindest couple in the world, and never prided themselves on the power they had of keeping their friends in order. In his sleeve, be it said, he somewhat wondered at it; but a pompous



look, he knew, like charity, covered a multitude of sins ; as a schoolmaster, he saw he was expected to do all the learned work in society, to construe Latin at a glance, and to look shocked at Greek ; and so far he had got on very well, on the echo he had of it all in his head : for he had in reality nothing much more than this echo.

A very desultory and immethodical education, by the help of a good hand writing—that letter of recommendation to all—had worked him up from the teacher of this craft to be the proprietor of the establishment ; knowing less when he began, than a school-boy of a few years standing. Living in the midst of his own *sor bonne*, it was impossible, and even without trouble on his part, for he still thought it easier to look learned than to be so ; that some vague points of classic lore should not stick at his skirts, sitting so much as he did, in the midst of them. At all events, *he knew what he did not know* ; serving as the Dungeness lighthouse

to the Goodwin sands, and perhaps the best point of observation for a charletan to start from.

This, and a little legerdemain, for there can be a sleight of look, as well as sleight of hand—enabled him very well to pass muster; turning <sup>up</sup> his eyes when pressed upon with a puzzling question; looking in such sceptical amaze at his interrogators, as he choose to consider it, *pretended ignorance*—that it gave the hint he was glad to give; and those who really had wished to be informed, walked off with the impression that they had taken in the pedagogue; whilst he himself felt like a mouse delivered of a mountain, when a delicate affair of this kind was settled.

In the presence of his pupils and other young people, it was a much easier line of rule he had to follow. A tone of irony reigned in all he then said, and a solemn and somewhat supercilious look made them feel so painfully small, that a “yes,” or a “no,” to the questions pro-

posed, he was most thankful to see was all the reply he could get out of them.

Once accustomed to the constraint, Bessie enjoyed herself as much with these her friends, as she could have done any where away from her dear mother. She was dreadfully afraid at first he would find out that she could not have replied to half the questions he might have proposed; taking it for granted that it would be something in geography she never had known: or something in history she had forgotten. But after a few days she lost this fear, seeing that in their private hours he had nothing in his ideas of the sort; so she worked for Mrs. Lambert, and cut the leaves of her husband's books; doing every thing she was bid, and nothing more; wishing every morning she could just ask her mama what dress she might put on, and feeling most sadly perplexed in her selections for the evening.

And the Lamberts were very gay, and her dear mother must have suspected it in letting

her have so many pretty things, for Bessie had never given it a thought; and indeed felt almost fluttered to find that day after day there was some party of pleasure proposed—some dancing in the evening. It was a new thing to Bessie; and she thought all her partners so kind: and Mr. Horace Clayton even more so than the rest of them.

And no wonder; for his attentions were taking that particular form, that even Mrs. Lambert thought it her duty to remark upon them; and when she cautioned her young friend, in the usual routine of caution, not to flirt with him too much, it puzzled Bessie to understand what she meant; and she feared to ask; for knowing the exact words her mother would use, ‘how stupid you are, Bessie!’ she shamed to betray, so far from home, her deficiencies.

And there was no pretence in this ignorance, for she positively did not understand the hint Mrs. Lambert had given her when she advised

her against flirting. She tried to remember whether her mother had ever used the word ? No, never to her certain knowledge. Her mother had known better. She never had talked of love, but to serve as a beacon to warn her against forming an imprudent match. She had been aware that all talking on the point was doing harm, and perhaps paving the way to an ill-judged or counterfeit passion ; that when this passion really did come, it would have its course, as in the way of hooping cough, measles, or scarlet fever, or any other juvenile complaint, incidental to the human frame ; and that though it might be deferred, yet was it in no way to be trifled with—a garment not to be put on one day, the next laid aside, to fit easy like a glove, or becoming as a cap ; neither a thing that we can toy, or play, or trifle with—entertain, or cry down, which ever our fancy pleases. She looked upon it rather as a fearful, a dangerous, an awful thing ; handled too lightly by those who might know

better; the bliss, or misery of a long---long life, treated as a jest; better was it an ingredient left out altogether, in our commerce with this world; this gift, sent straight from heaven, which could so little stand the shuffling, the jostling, the duplicity, and the dodging of this our mortal coil.

Mrs. Smith knew it all, and dreaded it for her child. She was aware that if once a deep and devoted passion got possession of the gentle Bessie's breast, the chances were, there it would abide for ever. • Bessie was such an angel---Bessie was such a fool, there was no energy in her---no wit to throw it off. There it must remain. Her mother saw all this,---that Bessie to love once, must love eternally; through rough--through smooth---dreaming and awaking---Bessie and love would be one---her affections concentrated in this sole object, and no misunderstanding; it would be immoveably fixed, like the northern star, that hath no fellow in the firmament.

So there was no need of talking of all this, more than her plans had required; indeed Mrs. Smith had rather looked upon Mr. Walronde as a great sand bag, if used adroitly, able to fence her Bessie off from all the pains---“the aching joys,” of this fearful master-passion. She therefore knew little of the theory of love, by word or book; if she suspected such a thing at all, it was merely an incipient knowledge.

So far it had produced the desired effect that Mrs. Smith had anticipated; it had even preserved a nature in Bessie's way, that, the satisfied mother, could hardly have expected. She saw her child unprepared to think, with every man who approached, that a love affair must be the result of it; and with no such idea---no preparing to guard or take captive---there was a *retenue* and a calmness in her ways, more prepossessing than the best finished manners in the world. Bessie was always herself; that is, so she appeared: she

had no part to play; no effect to keep up. no false colours to hang out; nor to furl others she might find in the way: she had selected a smoother course.

Such was the Bessie Smith who had so often formed the subject of the table talk between the two friends, as they lounged over their breakfast; Bessie coloured up into possessing such contradictory attributes, by the fertile imagination of her most ardent lover—qualifications that would not have helped even her own mother to have recognised her.

Yet was she still the same simple, quiet, unpretending girl; looking very pretty on some days, and nothing extraordinary on others; but cheerfulness and youth make a beauty in themselves. And there was a sunshine always wherever Bessie was—a quiet repose—a smile—and a good-natured word; these were all that Bessie had; but it was enough: she had gained Mr. Walrond's hard heart, and Horace Clayton's soft one, with only this stock-in-



trade. It was simplifying the science of conquest. She had taken two strong holds, that had heretofore been besieged in vain; and after she had got them, Bessie, for herself, did not know, well, what to do with them.

It will not therefore be supposed we are exaggerating, when we confess, for her, that ~~she~~ really did not understand Mrs. Lambert's hint, when the caution against flirting was given her. It seemed to puzzle her without enlightening her—"I am so very stupid!" she said twenty times a day, when her thoughts reverted to the subject. She did not know the *carte du pays* that is drawn out for society, as distinctly as the rail-roads that cut across the kingdom: she never dreamt that to dance two quadrilles with the same partner the same night, is that solecism in conventional regulations, that a whole room will point at as cleverly as a sporting dog in a field, and feel themselves justified in asking the question—what is it to come to? Bessie was too ignorant of the world and its ways, to

see the drift of this, so for want of anything else to think, she settled there was something Mrs. Lambert did not exactly approve in her manners; therefore, resolving to put a constraint upon them, she spoke less than ever; and confirmed Horace Clayton in the painful belief, that she really was engaged, and that this was the method she took to bring him to his senses.

And then did not he fly off into a tangent of his own constructing! and where was his imagination at work now? We shall see. His first mighty resolve was, to turn round and pay attention to some one else; this he settled would cut two ways: it would either make her jealous, or explain for him, that she had mistaken the nature of his advances. Well may Cupid be always represented with his sharp-pointed arrow; for there is nothing so spiteful as love—so pleased to give pain. We think if a saw were added to his implements of torture, it would not be out of character—jag—jag!

nag—nag! and then away go the two pieces--- one falling one way, one another.

And there is, as the proverb says, always a stick to beat a dog with. No sooner was the resolve made, than an object sprang up directly.

“Have you any followers?” was once asked a servant girl.

“Not at present, Ma’am:” the answer. And Horace had no idea, even the day before, that he should have changed the cynosure for all the eyes he had in his head; and had he had more---up to this time they would have been Bessie’s.

But he was now about to play a different card: and a great friend of Bessie’s, not only from her living so near, but her mother having been a school-fellow of Mrs. Smith’s, was the selected one to act the part of “the attendant in white dimity.”

Let all people beware, how they tamper with fire, or any other edged tools: it is sometimes pretty sport in the beginning: many things are, which

end badly. In no where is there so obvious a field for displaying the pur-blindness of mortal man, as at a chess-table; his sharpest intellects are at work—he has the best of it—he is pushing on with all his might for the game; and in one moment he is—check-mated.

This is a little episode of our own. It was a great *délassement* for Bessie to get into the house of her friends, after the straight laced decorum to be observed in that of the Lambert's; and as nothing brings women more together than sharing the attentions of one *cavalier servante*, so were Miss Atherton and Bessie much oftener companions than they had been before. There was the wish in both to find out the state of the thermometer of their admirer's regard—the distinct place in which they each stood; and this they thought they could glean from an unguarded discourse: not hitting upon the better expedient, and the sense it would show, to have done with such uncertainty altogether.

But Bessie was too young, and Miss Atherton too old, in her way, to discard a lover, merely because he had not exactly made up his mind which lady would suit him the best. They might easily have determined he could not love them both; for never was there so decided a contrast, as between the two young ladies in question.

And yet Miss Atherton was delighted with Bessie Smith,—talking enough herself for the two put together: and seeing the attraction that now brought Mr. Clayton to the house, she made the most of her stepping stone to his notice -- even though this stepping stone was the pretty Bessie, in all her primeval simplicity.

And Bessie was very well reconciled to all that was done,—talking to the little brothers and sisters, whilst Miss Atherton amused herself with the *ci-devant* lover. And then they would all talk together: Miss Atherton so amusing and so odd! she was always saying something strange: telling her little sisters that fiddle strings were

formed of fretful lovers, and that made them shriek, squeak, and moan so, when they were played upon : which immediately provoked Mr. Clayton to reply :—

“ Indeed, Miss Atherton, I am not fretful how were it possible in such company ?” with a sweeping sort of bow to the two ladies, and all the young children. So then Miss Atherton would give a little knowing shake of her head.—a head arranged to look very pretty, and observe, “ You are a pattern of every thing you should be ! I’ll have you chronicled and sung in all to be praised sonnets, and graved in new brave ballads, that all tongues shall trouble you, for the best bred lover in christendom.” And as she finished there was the provoking little shake of the head again ; for she professed to be taking the part of Bessie, and to be her champion. So, with the most persuasive expression. he would say :—

“ Nay.”

And again was the look, intending to make him out so haughty ; so he would

propitiate her ; and he would sit down by her side ; a tacit confession, as La Fontaine says, that, *La loi de plus fort, est toujours la meilleure*”

And Bessie was perfectly content it should be so ; for though she had taken Mr. Clayton’s roaming fancy, it was not so decided that he had secured hers. It is true she had been pleased with his lively and amusing talk ; but she liked Miss Atherton’s just as well ; and when they both conversed together, she had the two pleasures at once, without the effort of taking a part in either of them. So Bessie was content ; whilst Horace, knowing what his intentions were in regard to her if she really did please him, could not resist a smile and a wonder at her provoking indifference. He could not, for two days together, believe that she was engaged to be married, she was too young for that ; yet he could not understand her, twist her in whatever way he pleased. Miss Atherton would affect the same inability regarding her, with a very pretty look of wonderment, as she sat on the

lawn surrounded by the little lawless group of children ; and she would ask—

“ My dear Miss Smith, what can you possibly see in those noisy young creatures to amuse you ? ”

Bessie protested they were very sweet little companions, and appeared always *su* happy !

“ *Su* happy ! you little Devonshire thing. Do you hear her, Mr. Clayton ? ” Then turning to Bessie —“ I think brothers and sisters are the plague of one’s life—*du* you not consider them so ? ”

“ I never had any,” replied Bessie ; and there was a cadence in her voice peculiarly attractive as she said it. Clayton repeated it, trying as it were to catch the tone. Bessie blushed, for she heard it ; and dipping her head down among the children, thought it over to find out what she had said wrong : she did not know that it mattered little what she uttered, whilst her words came so seldom, and the quality of her voice was so agreeable.



Miss Atherton, also, made a sweet voice and simplicity of manner—seeing how much Bessie's pleased—one of her claims for the world's approbation,—a sort of skin-deep simplicity: the action not suiting with the words—the words conveying more meaning than it would have been easy to have proved: yet startling the ears upon which they fell. She could, besides, talk of chemistry and botany in her serious moments; cleverly turning her discourse by some eccentric *finesse*, if she felt approaching beyond her depth. Her portfolios were full of sketches and drawings: she sang very prettily, and there was a *piquant* manner in every thing she did, that might have made her a tormenting rival to Bessie, had she given the thing a care. But Bessie did not. She sometimes could not help thinking Mr. Clayton very strange, and somewhat uncertain in his attentions to herself: but how could he pay these attentions to two persons at the same time? the thing was impossible: and so the puzzle

ended, and all the strangeness in his ways of conducting himself.

Yet still Mrs. Lambert, who seemingly went to parties merely to display, as she called it, her "going out dress," and to take the papers from the bows of her last smart made cap, saw all that was passing with anxiety and fear, under the dread that her little friend Bessie might eventually be the sufferer. It had been hinted to her by Mrs. Smith, that her daughter was peculiarly situated : from this she went on to speak of Mr. Walrond ; leaving Mrs. Lambert to draw her own conclusions, as to the extent of the peculiar situation to which she had alluded. It would have been strange if she had not felt curiosity upon the subject ; but she did, and she asked Bessie, what sort of a person Mr. Walrond was ? and Bessie being in some awe, from intuitively feeling she was speaking to a person of very much the same stamp, replied,

" A very nice person, I believe. Mama

likes him very much." So as this "very much" was said with an *impressément* that it might put Mrs. Lambert into conceit with herself, it left the impression that she was satisfied with what was going on at home, whatever it might be ; and which only made Mrs. Lambert the more desirous that nothing abroad should militate against the mother's wishes and arrangements : so the only course left for her to take was, to follow Mr. Clayton in his volatile ways as closely as she could ; and if she saw him likely to mislead the heart of her young charge, she must frown him down—warn him off—cool him with cold water thrown on all he said ; and if this should all fail then, (like the birch rod in her husband's closet,) must come forth the engagement : she should inflict upon him this piece of information if the danger required it, and relieve herself, thereby, of all blame and responsibility.

We have explained how Horace had taken this intelligence, and how he had acted upon it.

It was a melancholy sight, at first, to see him pining under it. "Bessie engaged!" he exclaimed, every minute, as he sat, either reading or drawing, "Bessie engaged!" And once he heard an echo to the tormenting repetition—"Bessie engaged!"

He looked up. Henry flushed; but went on with his book.

"A pretty fellow to mock at the frustration of my plans—the downfall of my hopes! What shall I do if the intelligence be true?"

"I see but two alternatives." Horace was attentive. "Death with the choice of weapons;" Horace looked piteous; "or marriage;" and here Horace got up a fit of disgust; "with some other girl, you seem to me nearly as fond of talking about---what is her name?" Horace chose to have no idea, "Help me, my friend;" Horace was dumb---"Miss---Miss---Miss Atherton."

## CHAPTER VI.

WE have said, in a former page, that Henry Smith had not the least idea that the oft-named heroine of our tale---the little girl he had seen fainting on the grass---was the being that circumstances had entangled with his own fate,---the avoiding of whom gave him so much secret disquietude: neither could he for a moment have supposed that, (as the tradition tells us is the case with kindred souls,) she was "the pitcher companion" with whom he had come

down from heaven. He could not think it for a moment; it was impossible so pleasing a vision should ever enter his mind. His course was chalked out in another way. He had to marry, it was true: but what was his wife? what he always persisted in calling her—nothing better than “a drummer’s girl,” the follower of a camp—a low born, badly bred thing! The thought was just too shocking for him to bear; and with an “oh, gads!” that seemed to writhe his very body in its delivery, he turned from his own untoward lot, to amuse himself with his friend,—for he *was* amusing; and with this weighty concern upon his mind, of what he was to do to survive his sorrows, more eccentric in his ideas than ever.

“Well?” he said, as he watched him biting all round his lips and mouth in every part, an action that so well implies perplexity of thought; then suddenly stretching out his legs under the writing table, so as almost to jerk

himself out of his seat, and bringing his head nearly on a level with the table—"well?"

"Well? why I have just written my stated task; and now I am thinking."

"And how many books have you had to help you in your task?"

Horace laughed. "Only one: and you would never guess what one it is." He pointed to it on the table.

"Very well," said Henry, "very well in character with the white neckcloth and the rest. You only want that smart figured silk waistcoat to complete the picture."

"It is clerical."

"Not a bit: there is much more of the Adonis in it—black though it be—than mourning."

"And why, let me ask, should we be in mourning? I believe there is nothing in the scriptures to carry out the idea. I think it must have been a fellow of rather a satirical turn who first proposed a clergyman wearing

black. There should be nothing gloomy—nothing morose in religion. At a wedding, black is decidedly out of character; and at a funeral the friends may mourn the loss they have sustained, but the priest, methinks, might point out something better, and look a little brighter.”

“ You are laughing at me,” said Henry, “ I like black: it suits the gloomy habit of my soul. I am even too dull to support this controversy. Let us talk of something else.”

“ What shall it be ?”

“ Anything.”

“ Love ?”

“ An’, if you will. A mouthful of moonshine.”

“ No, Hal, you are too wise for me: hang up philosophy, I say, unless that, and your wisdom together will make me a Juliet, it helps not, it prevails not. If wisdom had this property, I’d talk you such a talk! as it is, you



cannot understand me. My dear friend I am in love."

"Very good. I understand that; and very desirable in its way."

"But I am making love to two girls at the same time; can you understand that? there's the rub."

"I should think so," calmly replied Henry. "I confess that to be quite beyond my comprehension."

"But what shall I do?"

"Try back."

"I cannot."

"Then go forward."

"Will you help me?"

"Me?"

"Yes."

"By my counsel?"

"Let gallows gape for dog: let man go free," thank you; very pretty talking I dare say, but with the mind harassed and per-

plexed as mine is, common sense would drive out all the little I have left, I must be actively employed; Mrs. Atherton has invited me to her house to-night; (you included, of course,) will you go with me? it is the last favor I will ask, try what you can do to assist me. I shall hang myself to-morrow; so come to-night and see."

"See! I should see nothing; and feel like a scared cat."

"Nonsense! only say that you will go: I really am weary of thinking what is best to be done: you will come fresh into the field, and shall decide for me; sound Bessie in one dance, keep her friend at bay in another; a conjuror, my dear fellow, always has his accomplice: I will do as much for you."

"Thank you. I do not require it," and he smiled as he said, "I fear we are no conjurors, Horace."

There was something in the smile that held

out a hope; just one ray of light, and Horace pushed on his request.

“ You will go? I see you agree to my proposal?”

Henry looked frightened.

“ It is agreed? say so, Hal, and have done with it.”

Again Henry considered the thing deeply, tore open his waistcoat---loosened his cravat---strained his arms out of the sleeves of his coat, brushed up his hair, and protested he was “ all over in an ecstasy,” a fever of fear and trembling at the bare idea of it.

Horace laughed out right; and hinted at *mauvaise honte*, “ If Cæsar hide himself shall they not whisper, Cæsar is afraid?”

This was enough. To settle the thing, a fly was ordered to the door at eight o'clock; and at nine, the two friends lounged into Mrs. Atherton's drawing-room, looking as cool and *déagé* as though it were a matter of course—an

every day occurrence—their being there together.

Henry had tact enough to keep, (among other things,) from his companion, that he had never been at a tea party of the sort before ; and to the seemingly casual question, of what he should do when he got there? as Horace had replied in his usual careless off hand way, “ Oh, just what you like,” he found he was thrown upon his own resources to think what he was really to do in a domestic party ; and to fancy what sort of a thing it all was, that could keep reasonable people out of their beds of a night, and in their beds the next day, in such a pretty romantic country place, where they could in the open <sup>air</sup> so much better spend their hours. But never was thinking more, “ a waste of thought,” than it was now to this young man : the fly stopped at the door, the bell was rung, they were ushered into the hall, drew their fingers through their curls, expanded their chests, and the next moment they were in the bright glare

and the merry noise of Mrs. Atherton's drawing room.

Henry immediately felt as though the sea were rushing into his ears, lightning flashing in his eyes, and his legs jerking in a sort of way as if suddenly deprived of their joints; whilst it required all his presence of mind to keep him from bolting round, and at once making his escape again.

He did not do it. It was a very small party, and he was soon reassured; for Mrs. Atherton, with the ease of a woman of the world, protesting it was a cold evening, though the beginning of June, was encouraging her little boys to light the fire; and without looking at all on Mr. Smith as a stranger, she put some paper matches in his hand—threw herself back in the chair—and requested him to help them to kindle it for her.

Then followed a discussion on the delights of a fire in such unseasonable times; and the qualifications requisite in those who should succeed

an making it burn brightly : a philosopher—a madman—or a lover—and all three seemed to have had to deal with the present ordeal ; for never did a fire burn so brightly. Then the children handed about the coffee and the cakes ; eating, all the time, with the most cheering and unaffected appetites themselves ; and there was enough for everybody to do, to see that every one was taken care of.

By this time Mr. Smith was seated near Mrs. Lambert on a sofa ; and in the long interval of waiting for her to get to the end of an elaborate exposition of some question that had been discussed before he made his appearance—and which, to his bewildered fancy, seemed like a disquisition in an unknown tongue—he had time to look from under the shade of his deeply fringed lids, and to cast cautious and lengthway glances on the party collected together.

Miss Atherton was pouring out the coffee, with the very prettiest grace in the world ;

smiling on Horace Clayton, on one side, curbing the children by a stage-play-got-up-frown on the other; and Henry pronounced her at once a very handsome person. There was not a question about the matter: she knew it, and, every body knew it: and there was one near, who not only seemed to know it, but to feel it. This was Horace Clayton. Teasing the children one moment—flirting with her the next: then helping her to hold the massive coffee pot, finishing, as might be expected, by pouring the coffee any where rather than into the cups.

And now a shout from all the children at once—"How clumsy! how clumsy! how clumsy! Hip-hip-hip-hurrah! Mr. Clayton has *shod* the coffee!" and then a general laugh all round, at the expense of the Devonshire word, they had picked up among them, during their short sojourn in the county.

"Silence." This was said from the papa; a quiet looking, gentlemanly man, engaged in

discussing politics with Mr. Lambert in the corner.

And where was Miss Bessie Smith? Why, she was sitting near her friend Miss Atherton; and had been assisting her in the duties of her office, before Mr. Clayton's entrance. She had now drawn her chair a few paces back, evidently to give place to this friend, in Mr. Clayton's attentions; and although Henry Smith had never, as it were, seen her before, (for *he* counted the introduction at the time of the fainting fit, nothing) he settled there was a flatness in her tone, from seeing her rival so evidently—so ostentatiously preferred to her: he wondered at his taste: but this was no business of his. Bessie sat quite silent. And he sat quite silent. Coffee was the order of the night; and the talk and the laugh went on. And Bessie had nothing to do; till all of a sudden—and it seemed to arouse her from her repose—every one took tea.

“And now there was the teapot to be filled,



and the cups and the spoons to be parcelled out : and seemingly apropos to nothing, for nobody asked him, Horace was always at Bessie's elbow to turn the urn for her, when the teapot required replenishing. And in one of these few and far between visits, Henry saw him rest his busy little head for a moment over her shoulder. A word had been said : and he enquired,

“ Do you hear ? ”

To which she replied, in not exactly an offended tone, but as though what had passed seemed to be out of place. “ No, indeed I did not hear.” And there was a little crain in Bessie's neck, that to Henry's idea, made her look more interesting than ever,

Then the cups were all returning empty ; and again they were to be filled : and there was a vast clatter among the young people, to decide who should have the pleasure of handing them. Vain was it for Henry to strain his ears, though Bessie was positively saying something to pacify them :—

"Had I three ears I'd hear thee!"

As it was, he was obliged to give up his number to Mrs. Lambert; who had just caught the strain of her husband's politics, and was following him about two or three words in arrear, addressing her discourse with all the energy of an original idea to the doomed Mr. Smith, keeping him sufficiently on the *qui vive* to take him from all else, by ever and anon stopping suddenly, to ask him, what his opinion was on the subject?

And he might very easily have given the answer Mr. Atherton was giving; for the gentlemen were getting energetic, and he heard it all as well as his tormenting interpreter. The storming the Chinese forts in the Bocca Tigris; a pupil of Mr. Lambert's had been there, and maps had been sent him, so he had it all at his fingers' ends: and the ends of his fingers were even sufficient to hear how glibly he discussed these great events. The great canal—the walls of the city—forty feet high—five

miles in circumference—called Ching Keang For; any other names would have done as well; but he repeated them three times to shew they were not the *impromptu* of the moment.

Then he narrated the results, with an episode on the wonders of steam! Phlegethon, Nemesis, Pluto. River Yang Ise Keang. Captain Hall's feats in the Nemesis at Sheepo; entered harbour; fort opened fire—destroyed guns—fired barracks—body of troops appeared—dispersed them with grape canister.

“Dispersed them with a tea canister!” echoed Mrs. Lambert. And there was no time even for a smile, for the engagement went on.

Burnt three war junks—attacked two forts—landed—destroyed guns—set fire to carriages and tents—returned on board—and positively proceeded out of harbour!

“What do you say to that, sir?” he asked, panting as though he had done it all himself, and looking just as satisfied, “what say you

to that? Steam, sir, will soon be our second nature!" wiping his face as he spoke, and fanning his sides with his elbows—very like a whale, or the flappers of the wonders he described.

But Mr. Atherton had somehow sunk in his easy chair, and was indulging in his first sleep: so a shrug—and the quick assurance, "I hear you," was all Mr. Lambert was likely to get in reply to his lively discourse. It was not enough to content him; so turning suddenly on the devoted Henry, he asked—

"And what do *you* say, sir, to all these exploits of this noble captain in the Chinese war? I think we can find something amid our classic lore, to express in some small degree our sentiments in respect to him. Surely we might fall into the opinion of Plato, assigning to every man, from his birth, a particular genius, or angel, to take care of him? 'Tis a pretty idea, sir! the familiar spirit that governed Socrates, looked upon by some as a

fiction, but for my part I think much might be said about it: nay, Origen, in his sixth book against Celsus, methinks bears me out. Come, sir, Captain Hall is as good a man as Socrates: you have, no doubt, something to say to exemplify the thing, when we see the Nemesis here! the Nemesis there! the Nemesis everywhere! Is it so very hard to tax your book learning, sir?"

"Not at all," replied Henry, with the same cool indifference in his tone, that he could have felt in battling with a great buzzing blue bottle fly, "What think you of Barnaby Rudge's raven? I'm a devil—I'm a devil—I'm a devil."

"Very good—really good—truly good!" smiled forth Mr. Lambert, prettily putting his two fore fingers together, in drawing-room applause, "Very good indeed, sir! one would be tempted *really* to believe you had witnessed the triumph of your critique. These impressions will pass into the imaginative

faculty of the soul—such as happens often in one's sleep.”

“I'm not asleep,” asserted Mr. Atherton, jumping up, and prepared briskly to defend the imputation Mrs. Atherton had, he fancied, put upon him. “I'm not asleep—I'm never asleep,” laughing off his mistake, “when tea and muffin is ready.” So there was some more tea to be handed—muffin to be produced—serving as well as a game of puss in the corner to change the whole position of the company.

It was a scuffle to get any tea at all; for the coffee was removed, and the table covered with books, drawings, puzzles, toys, and the ladies' working materials. Mrs. Lambert, looking rather outraged at Mr. Smith's familiar discourse concerning the devil in Mr. Lambert's presence, had sidled to the tea table, to help Bessie in the forthcoming of this new cup of tea; Mrs. Atherton was quietly cutting the leaves of the Athenæum, so there was little chance of the master of the house's request

being attended to, but for the two ladies in question. The toys had cut out the cakes completely in the young peoples' estimation; giving place to fox and goose on one side, te-to-tum on the other.

And then there must be tit-tat-tow among the boys; and Mr. Clayton and Miss Atherton must play a game together. Bessie was asked if she would play? The reply she made was common-place; but Horace forgot it was his turn to mark, made a cross instead of a round O, and was called by Miss Atherton, very stupid. It was stupid; so he professed that he had had enough; and got up, with a very little expense, a romp with one of the children.

"Take care of Charles' head against the ceiling," cautioned Mrs. Atherton, in the midst of her dog's sleep sort of reading. "Charles will forget he is not in his rooms in London; there, there, that will do, put him down."

"Fancy Mr. Clayton romping so in the pulpit," shouted the little one, the moment he

had recovered his breath, "Look at his hair!" and the ringlets were flying about in a way, if not quite clerical, yet really very becoming. "Look, what a figure he is making of himself!"

Mrs. Lambert gave a "humph," and thought so too; for he was not at all conducting himself in the way that Mr. Lambert had brought his young gentlemen up: so she, for something more pleasing to occupy her, proposed to Bessie to give her a bit more cake; reminding her at the same time, that her tea was always her best meal. Bessie did as she was bid; cut the cake, and the slice falling to the ground by some mal-adroitness on her part, in her infinite carefulness she quietly replaced it on the plate, thinking no one saw it, for Mr. Clayton's back was turned towards her; and Bessie sighed as she decided to herself, "No, he certainly did not see me."

And it was strange that no one had seen it— not even Mrs. Lambert, who would not have



eaten it for all the world, off the carpet in company, whatever she might have done in private,—no one but Henry Smith; he had seen it; and neither the carefulness nor the inquiring look at Horace, had been lost upon him.

And all this time the flirting went on most cheerily. What his plans were nobody knew; it was the first time that the bystanders confessed themselves at fault, on the supposition that Mr. Clayton's inclinations were changed. Hitherto Miss Bessie had uniformly to receive his most marked attentions; and she seemed, at first, to miss them as much as did all the rest: but as the evening went on, there was an expression of *hauteur* settled on her countenance:—her mother had not known her had she seen her “Bessie dear,” thus translated.

And strange to say Mr. Clayton saw it—seemed to understand it—and stranger still to say—was in no way displeased with it; so much for man's insight into a woman's heart!

They know the devotedness that is there—but they turn a blind eye upon the pride. Horace saw nothing that night but what his vanity enabled him to see, and was well pleased with. He was in a great measure showing off to his friend, and did not detect that there was another sentiment expressed on Bessie's face, to be understood only, perhaps, by those who well knew its changes; it was an apology to those around her, that those attentions which had been hers—the ornament of the room (so she thought in her infinite simplicity) should be hers no more. There was not much harm done; but so it was. And she was taking a lump of sugar to put in the cup of Mrs. Lambert's tea, still going on; when Mr. Clayton in a sudden whim, made a snatch at it—failed—and neither the attempt, or the failure, were remarked upon by Bessie.

“Do give it him, Miss Smith,” said one of the children.

"Miss Bessie is so lazy!" retorted another, "She will not take the trouble." Children soon see there is some demur; but they do not discriminate rightly.

"What a pretty little hand!" Miss Atherton was showing Horace a puzzle.

"Mr. Clayton! I must send you to the other side of the table."

"You are illtempered."

"That is what you have to expect."

"Yes," said Horace, with a look round the table—"illtemper on every side."

He now walked coolly across the room, and joined his friend and Mr. Lambert; and his merry voice was soon heard between them, "I love the people—I hate the corn-laws. I—"

"Don't marry a chartist," interrupted a little voice, first in Miss Atherton's ear, and then in Bessie's; not quite being able to decide which required the caution.

Then there was a skirmish between Mr. Clayton and the child ; and on the opposite side of the room, another between Mrs. Atherton and one of the younger girls ; who wished quadrilles before the tea was removed.

“ You shall have them, my love, in a moment ; I am talking to Mrs. Lambert.”

“ I did not want you to play, mama.”

“ Yes, you did.”

“ No, I did not,” said the spoilt child. And there was a dead silence as the skirmish concluded—an awkward silence—Mrs. Atherton looking angry—the child sheepish. And in the midst of it—for if there is anything extraordinary to be done, your shy person is always the one to do it—Bessie, seeing the little girl's confusion, volunteered to say something : then hesitated—making matters worse ; for when Bessie spoke, as we have said, everybody listened. And she had not expected this, in her wish to screen the shame-facedness of her little

friend: so she stammered—and the little culprit was the first to laugh—for Bessie had nothing to say of consequence sufficient for a whole room to hear: it therefore passed by, whatever she had fancied she could have said at the moment; leaving her sitting closer than ever to Mrs. Lambert: who seeing a move made towards the pianoforte, asked, in her best company voice, and a musical expression in her face,

“Cannot we have, young ladies, one of your pretty duetts, or some of those sweet little pieces you play so nicely? or a country dance?”

The little girl merely made a sort of sweeping curtsey — talked about quadrilles—and pushed away, without ceremony, the table from before her.

Every one had now something to do to get their chairs, or themselves, out of the way. And Mr. Clayton was the busiest of them all.

“ Miss Smith, you will dance with me ? ”  
This was not heard. “ Miss Bessie you will dance with me ? ”

“ No,” said Bessie.

“ No ! ” for it was really something extraordinary to see Bessie so decided, “ No ! a *priori* objection ? ” Who this was said to, no one could tell ; so it was no one’s business to reply to it ; and he turned off to secure ~~Mr~~ <sup>Mrs</sup> Atherton, just in time to see his friend led up to her by her mother, and accepted for the first quadrille. He bit his lips, to be thus thrown out on all sides. “ You will dance with me, Annie, won’t you ? ”

“ Yes, that I will, replied the little girl, surprised that such luck in a partner should fall to her share, “ I’ll dance with you, Mr. Clayton, right merrily.”

Mrs. Atherton proposed to play the quadrilles, so they were all soon in motion.

It was amusing to see the significant expression in Horace’s face, as he looked at his friend

standing in the dance. It seemed to say—"You there!" and there was one that answered it in the same quaint way, "Yes! it is I who am here!" a turn of the eye and a jerk of the head had said it. And then Henry walked through the figures, as well as any other christian who had learnt to dance, might have walked: and there was a seriousness in his movements that seemed to impress on the beholders the condescension it was in him thus to lend himself to assist in their pleasures.

"Where shall we stand?" asked Miss Atherton; making the children get out of her way.

"On our heels, at any rate," for his head was spinning round.

"You have been used to dance at Almacks, I perceive?" and smiling at the joke "where one is really glad to feel on one's feet, in the intensity, at times, of the crowd. We will take the top of the room."

"That you shall not," said one of the

children; "we have got it, Catherine, and we mean to keep it."

Henry felt the relief; for he had begun to hesitate and premeditate,—provided she had no objection he would rather stand—Oh, it was charming to see the vigor with which the children were determined to have their own way! There was no choice—no selection—for any one left: off they dashed from the top to the bottom, only stopping on their way to squabble as to the figure. It was delightful! and Henry raised his dark eyes from the ground, seeming to feel himself for the first time at home, so acceptable was the real nature of their hilarity; no finishing with the end of the tune—nor following the advice—*"Bélier mon ami! commencez par le commencement."*

"An opera, or ball,  
Were nothing at all,  
Compared to the style of their dancing O!"



“ We are never quite lost !” apostrophised Henry to himself, with a sigh of deeper thanksgiving, than it might have been supposed the matter deserved : and being assured that nothing was required of him, but to take every little hand that turned him about, pushing him back here—dragging him forward there—screaming out—

“ Not yet, sir.”

“ Now, *tour de main*.”

“ Now stick in your place.”

“ Now *avancez* : that means, cut off.”

And Miss Atherton laughed, and her partner laughed ; and she said, “ what are the children dancing ?”

“ The lancers—the lancers,” they all cried at once.

“ Then dance it on,” said the adults, at the same time, “ and to your own tune, for we know nothing about it.”

So Henry was glad to perceive them all

thus at fault, and seemingly as ignorant as himself; for there is a tenacity in ignorance, that cannot support the slur alone: as it was, it mattered not, and he was glad the ice was broken, and that he had seen himself—felt himself, at last, joining in the dance: and such a dance! bless their merry hearts, what a screen they had been to him, a—a panoply wherein Thersites himself might securely have withstood the rush of Hector, and all the chivalry of Troy: it was a most satisfying *début*, and to the children he owed it. He would build a temple to them some day.

After this uncereemonious quadrille there was no promenading round the room, but Henry saw that Miss Atherton looked for her portion of small talk at the end of it. Now, this was a science he had never acquired; as he fancied, from want of proper opportunities of practice; and this deficiency in his bringing up, added a shame upon the subject, that, as well may be supposed, rather augmented the evil. It never dawned on his conception

that he, even with the best advantages, would never have been a small talker: he had not the least aptitude for it; and it was not that he had nothing trivial to say; he could talk with Horace, by the hour, on the most trifling subjects: but a stranger, and that stranger a woman, ever spell-bound him. A silence would then settle on his chest, as painful to endure as the nightmare, we sometimes have in our sleep, when we wish for succour, and cannot find the power to call for assistance. It was vain for him to think of any subject of discourse: the longer he searched, the further he seemed to get from it: and as vain for him to settle, when the thralldom was passed, what he might have said, had he not been such a dolt as to let his diffidence get the better of him; whilst equally vain was it to plan what he would have to say the next time he should find himself in such a predicament. When the moment arrived he was just the same: nothing would come to his call, nothing wise—nothing weak—nothing at all. He could think

of no healths to ask for—no, weather to praise, or to condemn. No accidents had happened within his recollection: no great man so obliging as to die: no great lady so condescending as to be led to the hymeneal altar. He had been listening to the cheapness of meat with Mrs. Lambert till she had made him sick: so *that* would not do for Miss Atherton—what *could* he say? And little did he seem to know his own pretensions—the superiority of his looks, in asking this question.

But Miss Atherton was quite *au fait* at the world; and had settled in her own mind, that Mr. Smith was just the sort of man that she must amuse—expect little from in return—and yet be thankful for his condescension: in short he must be charmed, before he would take the trouble to charm her, or anybody.

What a relief then to him, seemed her discourse! like water to parched lips—green meadows in the midst of the desert! His

satisfaction beamed through his eyes; and never had Catherine Atherton looked on one so handsome. There was a steady quiet in his manner, that pleased her above all,—a seeming diffidence, had he anything to be diffident of: as it was, it must be the pleasure he felt from her society, that caused him so gracefully to listen to her agreeable talk; for that she was agreeable she knew; there was no necessity to interrupt his silence to tell her that; and this evening the stock of this agreeableness seemed without bounds. She had a liquid manner of modulating her voice—a graceful and something peculiar way of acting with her hands; and her laugh!

“Every body remarks my laugh,” she observed, “It is such a laugh.” And she laughed again; and Henry found she was making the most of that, which without effect might have been a very pretty laugh; as it was, it was like an actress’s on the stage, or the pro-

longed warble of a canary bird, rather paining the hearer before it was done with. Yet to Henry all seemed delightful; for he was most unexpectedly saved the agony of attempting to talk, and the mortification of, what he knew, would have been a failure.

## CHAPTER VII.

AND all this time not one word—one look had been cast upon Horace Clayton; and he began to think he had let his friend enjoy the society of Miss Atherton quite long enough to appreciate the compliment she paid to himself in receiving his attentions. He had, during the time they had taken to themselves since the dance, been beating up against Mrs. Lambert, with whom he had just begun to suspect he was no very great favorite. Then he had tried to

get Mr. Atherton into a chat; but the nap was too strong for him. He could converse, he thought, with most people; but not to those, who, like Mr. Atherton, talked in their sleep; for after having run through all the phases of the weather to cheer him up, he had begun a new conversation, by observing—

“What a cold day it has been for the time of year, Mr. Clayton.” So Mr. Clayton could not stand this, and let him sleep on, and looking round for Bessie, he saw she was talking to Mr. Lambert; and it was provoking the number of little kind words she could find for him, and not one for Horace on the other side, and he such a stupid old man!

And Horace had a trick of talking aloud, sometimes; and he said, “I hate fools!” so Bessie taking the compliment to herself, was more impenetrably silent than ever. And he observed—

“Miss Smith, you are in the dreariest mood I ever saw you in, in my life.”



She merely replied, "Am I, Mr. Clayton?"

But not so the children; they were getting wild for another <sup>quá</sup>drille.

"Do play us one, dear mama."

"No, my loves, I am working the cross of St. George, for Freddy's flag."

"Please put it away," said Horace in his most persuasive tone; who knew the stir up a quadrille would give. "Patience, and shuffle the cards; do play, never mind the cross. You don't know who St. George was?"

"No, that I don't."

"He was a martyr, ma'am, of Capadocia, and destroyed by the Dioclesians," pompously stated Mr. Lambert.

"Write that down, Annic," said Mrs. Atherton.

"How is it spelt?" asked the little girl.

Some said with s, others with a t; so Mr. Lambert spelt it for them.

"Write me down an ass?" quoted Clayton. Mrs. Atherton laughed.

“ You know more than you ought, Mrs. Atherton.”

“ No, indeed, I do not. I only know the children are very tiresome.”

By this time the flag was finished; and again a quadrille was proposed. There seemed to be all dancers and no players; for Mrs. Atherton, the victim of Fred's gratitude for his beautiful flag, was dragged into the set to dance with him.

“ Bessie will play,” said Mrs. Lambert.

“ No, she must dance with Mr. Smith,” protested Miss Atherton.

He arose; but Bessie was already seated at the instrument. So little Annie fell to Mr. Smith's share, whilst Horace seemed quite to have shuffled the party to his own satisfaction as he led Miss Atherton; jostling the children, however, out of the position, the gaining of which placed him as near as he could be placed to the elbow of Bessie; when Mrs.

Lambert, now ever on the watch, and seeming to think the constraint of her presence might be necessary, coolly established herself at the other elbow.

And Bessie looked so tranquil, and yet so cheerful as she went through the difficult quadrilles they had selected for her, playing their every note; for Bessie really did play well, and Mr. Clayton was ever at hand to turn over the leaf for her. And sometimes he would just utter a word at the same moment; and this, for an instant, put Bessie out in the time. But her mamma was not there; so it passed with out remark.

And the leaf was to be turned again; and the clear notes in the most brilliant passage all of a sudden stopped. It was but for a moment. Mrs. Lambert looked daggers at him: but Horace was soon in his place by the side of Miss Atherton; and the music went on as before.

It was a long piece; and the children made

it longer by their blunders. Then there was the waltz afterwards. Mrs. Lambert had narrowly watched her favorite; and to her idea she was out of harm's way whilst she remained at the piano, and she kept guard beside her: so she was very glad to see her continuing the tune through and through again. Once Mrs. Lambert had despaired of, even Bessie, beginning it once more: but she did: and in her soft voice she said: "How pretty it is!"

Henry thought she would never leave off. Yet to his mind, as she sat, clad in her simple white dress, he had never seen any one<sup>u</sup> look so unpretending, and at the same time so lovely.

And all the room wished—Miss Atherton excepted, and she did not care about it—that Bessie would not dance with Mr. Clayton that evening; and all desired to tell her so, who had, as they thought, her interest at heart. Indeed, Mrs. Lambert almost settled it was her

duty to tell her so; but it required a long story; no nod, and no wink would do for Bessie: she might not understand that he was only sporting with her feelings; and people would hear it all over the room, if she told her so. 'Therefore, Bessie, before the evening was over, *did* dance with Mr. Clayton; for Bessie had no idea of *finessing*.

With Mr. Henry Smith in the room, who was so much more *distingué* a looking person, and therefore more worthy the privilege of falling to her daughter's share, even Mrs. Atherton could feel an interest in Bessie's well doing; and she did not wish her to dance with Mr. Clayton this evening; she longed rather to see her punish him severely for his capriciousness. But what was to be done? for at the same time, she desired to ~~see~~ see her and her Catherine in the quadrille together; and she knew, if Bessie danced at all, there was no escape from her dancing it with him. So dance with him she must; for as we have said, Mrs.

Atherton thought it would advance her daughter's views of conquest, by the contrast of being seen in the same dance with the simple—the unpretending Bessie.

“ There's nought so sharp on earth,  
As women who have cut their wisdom teeth,”

So says a modern poet, with more of quaintness than refinement; yet perhaps a great deal of truth in it; and Mrs. Atherton seemed to prove it; for while she had a manner of appearing, very innocently, to be amusing herself, she had the power of turning a whole room into the course she best pleased; making them apparently oblige themselves by just doing what she liked: and though there would sometimes be a little *émeute* between the younger children and her views, Catherine knew better than to settle these matters in company. So the quadrille was formed in the exact manner Mrs. Atherton desired it should be formed; Catherine at the top, looking per-

fectly as her mother would wish her to look ; not showing off—as it is expressed, but feeling herself the queen of the dance ; dressed richly and with an elegance that evinced the most approved taste had been consulted in the selection : so being perfectly satisfied with herself, she laughed, and talked, and looked, and danced her best.

Her partner was Mr. Lambert : Mrs. Ather-ton could have wished this otherwise, yet still there was something interesting in her dancing with an old man ; and besides, Mr. Smith was attentively looking on ; which was the next best thing to having secured her hand. There was, however, no deficiency of spirit in the set, whilst the children sported about, making their usual clatter ; some gliding through the air, as though carried along by the current of sweet sound ; others bumping their bodies like active post-boye, and all satisfied with their evolutions.

And where was Bessie all this time ? Why,

she was standing very silent by the side of Horace Clayton; but this was nothing extraordinary—Horace was talking enough for the two put together. She looked very good-tempered, but serious; and instead of turning her head to him, as he seemed to wish, by his therefore bringing his face round before hers; she took no notice of it but looked steadily first on one side, and then on the other, as though attentively watching the dancers.

And now it was that Horace wished to make her feel, that notwithstanding what he had done, and he confessed he had been “very naughty,” and in spite of his neglect and contradictory ways, he was hers—and hers only.

“Is it not always flattering to be chosen for the last dance? Miss Smith knows how anxiously I have looked forward to this part of the evening.”

Bessie did not know it.

“But you feel it is so?”



Bessie did not feel it.

Good gracious, how stupid Bessie was ! and his friend witnessing all her apathy. Had he gone too far ? for though to all else Bessie might appear to conduct herself towards him the same as usual—nay did appear the same—he felt a change had taken place ; and the bare suspicion that he had possessed the power over her to alter her good opinion, quite drove him to distraction ; and “ I am a fool,” he said talking to himself, for no one contradicted him, “ I am a fool—and I always thought so.”

Bessie had never, perhaps, looked so pretty as she did in this the last quadrille : her usual placidity of manner was blended with a languor—a *laissez aller*, that just made even Bessie more charming than ever. Horace could not but remark it ; and it made him vilify his stars more than before. What a suicide had he not committed on his own happiness ! so true, so pure, so simple, and so touching in her displeasure ;—for that she was

displeased he saw—he felt; and even to *displease* Bessie Smith was a something he now felt undeserving of. What were all the attractions of Miss Atherton, compared to one of her simple traits? what had he been about? leaving it to him now, almost a useful question.

Miss Atherton's laugh rang in his ears.

"You always notice my laugh, Mr. Clayton," she said as she passed.

"I do," he replied; but he put up his dorsal fin as he said it. And Miss Atherton's laugh stopped suddenly; for aware that she had somewhat failed in her allegiance to her professed flirt, whilst Mr. Smith was only, so far, an honorary one, she called herself to order. And the rest of the dance Horace was glad even to have something to do in replying to her merry sallies—her *minauleries*—yet all glancing off from the bosom, mailed with a true affection for Bessie, fluttering still under a forlorn hope, and promising, like a penitent

child, as he took her passive hand to wish her good night, that he really and truly would behave better for the future. And what did Bessie say? what generally Bessie did say on most occasions; she smiled—bowed—looked as if she cared not,—and said nothing.

The evening ended as such evenings usually do end. Mrs. Atherton lectured the children for really being too boisterous and ill-behaved; scolded Mr. Atherton for sleeping in his chair, “It is such a bad compliment to your friends.”

“Not a bit, my dear; it serves to convince them they are not in my way,—which I can assure them they would be, were I not at liberty to make myself comfortable.”

Miss Atherton blamed herself with having let off one lover before she had exactly secured another: raved about Henry Smith—thought Bessie looking uncommonly pretty—took a light to peep at herself in the glass, and was

satisfied: whilst the children hurried off, tumbling one over the other up the stairs, to see which should get to bed the fastest.

And what did Bessie think of all that had passed? why, Bessie did not exactly know what to think. She could not account for the inconsistency Mr. Clayton had betrayed: unconsciously to herself, she had begun to feel pleased with the attentions he had paid her: it was a new thing to her, and had given her a degree of confidence in herself, and made her feel almost a something in the world; and Bessie felt pleased in having secured such a friend:—in a word, Mr. Clayton had just contrived to vibrate some chord in the simple girl's heart---to make her feel an interest in all that passed, and to believe herself secure in the flattering preference he had awarded her.

Bessie had told herself all this; had talked it over on her pillow: and had settled how it would surprise her mama to hear it, that Bessie

had made a friend without her help! that it should change, fade away like the evanescent colours of the rainbow—return a little, and then again subside—she had never dreamt. How could a simple-minded girl ever dream of such a thing as this! whilst the explaining it in any way satisfactorily to herself, was as far beyond her powers; so perfectly ignorant was she of the ways, even of the naughty little world of Sandycliff. But Bessie knew how she felt it: her honest mind was wounded, and she asked herself the question, over and over again, why had Mr. Clayton so acted? The solution still too deep for Bessie's wits; assuming sentiments he did not feel, for what? Why had he done it?

It was a sharp lesson to learn all of a moment, not to feel confident in friendship; that a tacit compact between two persons was to be broken by one in a moment, and no redress for the other. These reflections gave her a sinking in the heart, and a worry in the brain.

Bessie had never been so plagued before ; and she made a resolve to herself, never to be so plagued again. So Bessie's evening had only served to see her established in her resolve, to "conceal her vexations," but never—no never to trust again : and when she sought her pillow, dreams would not leave her troubled mind at rest.

"Tainting the very  
Source whence sweet repose into the weary  
Spirit comes."

And she dreamt of fighting, skirmishing, and quarrelling,—dreams all so foreign to Bessie's little bed at home.

But there was a great relief in the resolve that she had formed ; and she arose at peace with herself, if not best pleased with Mr. Clayton and his crooked ways. But Bessie's was no age to ponder and to brood : it was a bright day, and that with youth—sweet youth ! is often half the battle. So she replied to one

of the well laid questions at the breakfast table the next morning, with a cheerful voice and a happy expression of face: merely, observing Mr. Clayton did not know his own mind; and left her friends impressed with the belief, that what they had felt, Bessie had not troubled herself about feeling.

Then there were the little chickens to be fed with the crumbs, under their coops out upon the lawn; and Bessie so cheerfully took upon herself the charge, that Mr. and Mrs. Lambert exchanged glances of assurance between themselves, that, so far, there was no harm done. Then the fresh flowers were to be put in the rooms; and Bessie looked as brightly blooming as the rose buds she held in her hand. What could have made them fear they should see she had been annoyed? It was a satisfaction to find themselves deceived. Bessie was a dutiful child; and even away from her mother's controul—right or wrong—she did not forget her

instructions; and without diving into the merits of how it was, she gained the relief of being free from the *surveillance* of her friends, she did not forget the lesson inculcated—"conceal your vexations."



## CHAPTER VIII.

“ No more dams I'll make for fish ,  
Nor fetch firing  
At requiring,

Nor scrape trenchering, nor wash dish :

‘Ban, ‘Ban Ca—Caliban,

Has a new master—get a new man.

“ Freedom, hey-day ! hey-day, freedom ! freedom,  
hey-day, freedom ! ”

The friends were seated at breakfast, and  
Horace laughed in spite of himself at Henry's  
quaintly expressed mirth—

“ ‘Ban, ‘Ban—Ca—Caliban,  
Has a new master—get a new man.”

It is a beautiful air Shakespeare’s words are set to, and Henry would have gone on singing them till now, if his friend had not again interrupted him. So he said in his own coin :

“ ‘ I prythee now, lead the way, without any more talking.’ What ails thee Hal? What see you to laugh and sing about, more than ever? Let us talk concerning last night.”

“ Why that is the very reason I laugh—  
As Florian’s Myson says,

‘ Vraiment repondit il, voilà pourquoi je ris.’

“ Nonsense !”

“ Really and truly. You are ~~do’d~~, my dear fellow, regularly *do’d*! as you express a defeat in Devon. I saw it in a moment. That little girl means to have nothing more to say to you.”

Horace felt as though a dagger had suddenly pierced him, by this straight-forward confirma-

tion of his worst fears. He looked deeply penetrated, and said:—

"I suspect so too. I fear so; and this is not what I had intended. It is the way with the simple ones; they act from instinct: a woman of high fashion could not have been more decided. But fancy Bessie—pretty Bessie, giving herself airs!"

"I can well fancy it," replied Henry, and there was a long silence, only interrupted by the clatter of the knives, forks, and tea-cups.

"Hang it all! hang it all! What shall I do?" asked Horace, the first to speak. "Shall I laugh or cry? live or die? Have you no little crust of hope to give me—a cold potatoe, as the beggars say?"

Henry shook his head.

"Did you do anything for me? for that, if you recollect, was the object of your visit. You seemed to make out the time pretty well, considering you merely went to oblige me—you remember it was to do me a service; did

you discover anything—did you— as Sir Anthony Absolute asks:—‘ did you say anything sensible—anything about me?’”

“ My dear friend,” suddenly interrupted Henry, “ you seem to forget, that I did not speak to Miss Smith the whole evening.”

“ But you were introduced to her?”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, and that was enough?”

“ Oh, too much—too much!”

“ What, not speak then! What did you do?”

“ Why I faced round, and felt very uncomfortable; said, of all silly things in the world, ‘ how d’ye do?’ stared in her face for a few moments, and then turned off in a transport of awkwardness. You cannot think what a very diffident young man I am in female society.”

Here Horace laughed outright. “ Oh! oh! oh! ha! ha! ha! But, Hal, how is it, you do not bring your diffidence home with you?”

“To be sure I do not. But hang up a petticoat and a bonnet on that fire screen, and see what I become! I can in no way account for it.”

“Then you will not expect me to throw any light upon it—poor me who always bow to your superior wisdom. Come, Hal, you think yourself very clever; what shall I do with my two Sultanas?”

“If she were not so very—very pretty, I should say, give the *diable* one, to rid you of the other.”

“Then you do think Miss Atherton handsome?”

A pause—and a little halt to consider whether the truth was, or was not to be spoken. Truth carried the day.

“Miss Atherton has decided pretensions to beauty.”

“*Pretensions!* what do you mean by that?”

“Why—why—one is not exactly justified

in saying she has no attractions; she has good eyes—good teeth—complexion—and a very good figure to hang her toggery upon.”

“ Damning with faint praise.”

“ No indeed, I leave those ugly words for you: She is a very nice girl—yes—a very nice person. Pray be easy under ~~your~~ conquest, without expecting all the world to do her homage.”

“ *My* conquest! why that, *mon ami*, is a part of my complaint this morning; damping my appetite, and making me look on so languidly at those mutton chops. ‘He who hunts two hares, misses the one, and loses the other.’ It is a good saying: for if eyes speak any language at all, I should say, with all due respect to your diffidence, my modest friend here, was not at all displeasing to Miss Atherton, for a first night’s acquaintance.”

“ The green-eyed monster! Have a care, Horace. The jealous always look through a

glass which magnifies small things into large ones—dwarfs into giants—and imaginations into realities. “I have no *penchant* for Miss Atherton.”

“May I be sunk to the lowest pit of Hades, if thou, for a shy man, art not the greatest coxcomb in Christendom!”

“You have not yet to be told, I suppose, the little avail fine words have in making parsnips palatable.”

“Why not out with it at once?” said Horace hastily, “fine words butter no parsnips: but what has that to do with my case?”

“It is to exemplify, the proving me a coxcomb will not help you to be a happy man. ~~It seems to me~~ that you have cast a treasure from you. I speak at random; but to me Miss Smith—what a detestable name!”

“Why, it is your own.”

“The more is the pity. I forget what I was about to observe.”

“ You said—‘ to me Miss Smith.’ ”

“ I tell you I have forgotten. Oh, if you knew how I do hate the name of Smith !”

“ Well, with me that is no objection to the young lady : I care not concerning her name ; my greatest happiness would be to get her to change it for Clayton.”

To this there was no answer. Henry had gone off into one of his taciturn fits : and so ended the conversation.

The having been inveigled into an evening party, seemed a grand era in Henry Smith's life. *C'est le premier pas qui coûte*, or something of this sort ; for though he termed himself a foot ball for his friend to roll about which way he pleased, yet Horace soon very clearly saw that it was in as great a measure to please himself, that his friend accepted all the invitations which now so thickly showered in upon him.

We need not follow the two young men into every plate of bread and butter they consumed,



or drag them through all the sandwiches that found their way to their mouths; suffice it to say, the society at Sandycliff was the same as society generally is, in all such nooks near the Land's end of Great and civilized Britain; thinking itself the very axis on which the earth moved—a nucleus of light—the cynosure of the most approved method of doing company.

There was something exquisitely whimsical to Henry Smith, in finding himself tamely submitting to this mince-meat sort of intercourse with his fellow creatures; to see himself seated on a sofa between two elderly belles, listening to the nothing to say patch-work of their ~~evening's discourse~~. No mind mixed up with it—and little matter; and, worst of all, not even one trait of nature. It would have seemed better to him, had they at once dashed off and talked about themselves—their hopes---their fears---the one closely touched upon by the other. As it was, there was a flatness to the

ear, and a starving to the sense in what they advanced;—tending to nothing, but to conceal what they *might* have said, had they given themselves the freedom of speaking naturally. He thought to himself, the deep wood and the lone shore was much better companionship than this; for these did speak to him as nature willed it. He felt not strange in whatever wild he was, nor startled by the sound of his own voice, amid his familiar haunts; then why should a coterie of middle aged ladies tend thus to petrify him? Of course, as the thing is generally settled by ourselves, the fault was theirs. Sometimes he would get into the vortex of Mr. Lambert's fire off learning; and could he have dictated to him what ~~to have~~ talked about, he might have been his most pleasant companion. As it was, he could not: his tongue seemed taken with an atrophe the moment he would propose it. So instead, he had to listen, with plenty of time to repent him of his hardihood in cultivating such society,

to amenable rules---regulations of the mind---taxes, wars, and treaties---fight with him through all the battles of Napoleon---a school-master's fight---in which whatever his adversaries' opinion, self-elected, he was sure to gain the victory. And then Charles the Fifth---peace be to his manes! was hauled over the coals; and he talked of his glory, and Henry could not see it in the insolence of abused power; and he said, the simplest flower would explain it better. Mr. Lambert pitied his conception of things, Henry could not help it; yet he smiled in his own conceit at all that was going on, thanking his stars that the Pedagogue with all his depth, did not detect it.

Henry loved to study human nature wherever he found it; and it was a new school to him to follow it into society. He saw at one glance, there was little integrity to be discovered amid its wax lights, and its prim, conventional behaviour. It was to him sorrowful to observe the lures and crafts that were going

on; it was as though cats were waiting to catch mice; spiders trying to enthrall flies; he saw to what their inquisitiveness would point; and that they were even watching his friend Horace with almost breathless anxiety, hoping he would hit upon some broad absurdity, and so commit himself. And then he would almost tremble to see how near fate, and an off hand manner, would lead him to the brink; leaving him to hail some clever *coup de grace*, which would again get him off. So there was plenty to amuse Henry Smith wherever he went; and well pleased was the little village in having two such beaux to watch in their turn; to put constructions on all their actions; and to decide which of the two beauties the place, was by each the best preferred.

And it must be confessed, it put ingenuity to the sharpest test to make anything of a decision; for that which was carried *bona fide* one night, the next would as assuredly unsettle. They had been so often taken in by seeing

couples walking together on the beach, and by dancing even two quadrilles in the same evening, that though there was plenty of this to go upon, it was not enough; they wanted more. They wished to know exactly which of the gentlemen Miss Atherton would prefer; making sure that the simple Bessie Smith would most gladly take up with her leavings.

So the tea parties went on, and none so pleasant to the two friends, notwithstanding the childrens' noise, as the parties at Mrs. Atherton's; for there was a nature about these young things, helped by their riot, that put others at their ease; scaring away ceremony as a flapper will the birds: and the young men were glad to be quit of it, even at the cost of their individual views and comfort.

But they could not always exactly choose where their meetings were to be. ~~Any~~where was always better than nowhere; so ~~we~~ are now going to follow them to a party at Mrs. Lambert's.

“How very pretty she looks to-night!” observed Horace to Henry Smith, pointing his regards to Miss Atherton and Bessie, who were starchily seated side by side at one end of the room, whilst the two friends felt themselves as far apart as New Zealand, in another, without the least probability that any turn of the stiff axle of Mrs. Lambert’s arrangements, would ever bring them together. All was stationary and formal: the only thing lively in the room, the servant maid wisking round after the footman, with the tray of empty cups, and bread and butter. In such a stagnation of affairs, the very creak of her shoes was an alleviation. Oh, for the war-whoop of Mrs. Atherton’s children, or Miss Catherine’s laugh; but all was as mournful as at a funeral: even Henry seemed tired of being silent; and he said, “Simply to praise her for her beauty, appears to me too bounded a scope for the feeling she inspires.”

“Which do you mean?” suddenly questioned

Horace, somewhat surprised at the deep feeling in his friend's tone, and looking into his eyes to see if he could, by following them, discover the object of his praise. But they were quietly studying the pattern on Mrs. Lambert's elaborate carpet; and he replied, put on his guard by the inquisitiveness of his questioner—

“ Which do *you* mean ?”

“ I do not know,” rejoined Horace, “ which I mean. I am vexed with myself, Henry,—vexed with all around. My soul still clings to its first choice, whilst my actions render homage to one, whom, after all is said and done, I suspect is but a heartless beauty—an instrument wound up to suit the taste of all. It strikes me now, you have a better chance in that quarter than myself, so pray avail yourself of it—never mind <sup>me</sup>.”

“ Thank you for the permission,” said Henry, drily, “ I shall not forget it, if I desire to make use of it.”

There was at last a move in the room, for the card tables were being formed; and Mrs. Lambert walked round, in her silver grey dress, simpering and looking with a most persuasive expression, as she held a pack of cards in her hand.

“There now! Mr. Smith is gone. But you,\* Mr. Clayton, will oblige me by playing *one* rubber?”

He was taken by surprise, and perhaps hoping to be on better terms with her in consequence; he took the card she offered him, and in less time than a martyr is given to recommend himself to mercy, he found himself seated vis-a-vis with a regular aversion of his, the gossip of the parish: a creature held in as much fear by love making young men, as the beadle is by all the little naughty boys.

Mrs. Witworth was a decided chronicle of scandal; one who would even stop you in



the street, and without mercy get into a long story.

“ Blow, blow, thou winter’s wind,  
Thou art not so unkind.”

Not the most cutting east wind that ever blew, could hit harder than Mrs. Witworth, if she liked it.

“ Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen.”

Hers was both seen and felt—long teeth that looked sharp and hungry—rabid teeth—that would bite at everything : and when she failed in rooting up any little *on dits* of the moment, she made ample amends by inventing, adlibitum, her own story.

There are two kinds of people at watering places, very different species of the *genus homo*—we mean the visitors and the residents : the former consisting for the most part of such

people, who are sent to die by their physicians, or gay people who have outlived the healthy part of their incomes; so they bring the consumptive remainder to renovate itself in a cheap market; not remembering that they bring the plague spot with them—the predilection of living beyond their means: from this distemper there is no place can secure them.

There is another description of watering-place people—*fidgets*—seeking rest, and finding none, and thinking the great desideratum can be affected by change—unhallowed word! not reflecting that the alteration they require is, to mend their ways. These sort of people have no homes, and are ever bewailing themselves that they have no friends; they look restless and dissatisfied; fancy there is good to be had wherever they are not; and where they are, their occupation is to abuse and cry down everything: and so they wander on the face of the earth—nothing lasting with them, nothing settle, but their complaints—nothing

to lay hold of in them, but their money; therefore on this score they are welcome visitors in a watering place; where the most important distinction in the visitors is, between those who can, and those who cannot pay; the one having, generally, to give as much again for the things they require as the residents.

The Lamberts rather piqued themselves upon their acquaintance; not in their ability to amuse, for as Mrs. Lambert, with an extraordinary twist of her nose, observed---“ Mr. Lambert neither liked buffoons, nor actor people,” But they esteemed men who had made their fortunes, not ~~matter~~ <sup>regard</sup> how or where; so that they came to Sandycliff to spend them. These were rare; but there was instead a plentiful distribution of the creature yclept “ old maid,” by young and silly girls---a sort of store ship laid up from service; for the old maid has had her days, her hopes, her fears, her triumphs, and her joys. *They* have left her; and not *she* who has left them. She

feels herself the same ; a mind willing to fix--- a heart <sup>it</sup> longing to love : but wherever she goes, all is blank. She hears how silly the young things talk : could not she talk and amuse much better ! Oh, yes, but no one looks for her approach---waits for her opinion ---or mourns her silence---her depart. Her day is done : she laments her lot, and ofttimes has not the wit to find out that her sorrows are but the absence of joys---her pains the failure of pleasures. Blissful state ! if ever the earth was the abode of happiness, here, surely, it should be. But it is not : there is ever a querulous look round for the peace that fails to present itself. At home it is not ; so it is sought for abroad : and there were a whole chain of ladies, such as these, seated round Mrs. Lambert's drawing-room, looking like the ice plants that ~~long~~ <sup>hang</sup> in Trophonious's cave, or pale and dejected as the applicants who were supposed to have consulted its oracle. It was with two of these ladies, and Mrs. Wit-

worth, that the whist table was composed--- Horace Clayton constituting the fourth: and he liked it not, but it was too late to go back; therefore he consented to make the best of it. With seemingly at times not a grain of sense in his head, he was about as sharp as a needle, if it suited him to be sharp,—his eye carrying the point in question, as true as the eye of the said article carries its thread. If he chose to be dull, a dead wall or a sack of flour might be offended by the comparison. He knew well the person he had to deal with in Mrs. Witworth; and the only thing that at all reconciled him to the pit<sup>in</sup> which he had fallen by his tame compliance in taking a card was, that it might throw her off the scent, for it stood to reason, no man really preferring the society of either of the only two *belles* in the room, would ever set himself down to look at her over a card table.

“Two by honors.”

“And the odd trick,” said Horace, resting

on his oars, and stealing a side glance round. He took a pinch of snuff; and those who knew him well, could judge something of his feelings by the way in which he took it. It was now done with a jerk, and a ferocious sort of sniff; expressing, as well as it could, "well, it is impossible to help it."

"I cannot think how you can take so much snuff!" said one of the single ladies. Horace thought it was no business of hers whether he took it or not; so he did not trouble himself to reply to this remark. He would rather, he thought, take it than take her, any day.

"I believe it is your deal, Mr. Clayton?"

Horace dealt the cards; he was not in a good humour, so he dealt with a very listless care-nought air, and turned up the queen of hearts.

"Ominous, I think," said Mrs. Witworth. Clayton did not choose to hear the speech; he wished to show he was not fond of cards, and there was nothing to change his taste in such a party as the present. The only time he could

stand it, was, with Mrs. Atherton and her children; when Bessie would play too, not knowing a diamond from a club; and Miss Atherton, so cleverly winning all the tricks. He liked it then; but now it was detestable. He wanted to watch Bessie, her friend and Henry Smith: and the ladies wore such extraordinary hats and feathers, there was very little chance, even, of seeing between them.

"Have you heard the news?" asked Mrs. Witworth of one of the ladies.

"No, the place is so dull I am weary of looking for news. You are only tantalizing me. There is nothing going on; is there?"

"Yes there is; you must have been asleep! have you not heard it generally reported that Miss Bessie Smith is going to be married?" Horace looked very intently on his game; then set up a little small-talk conversation with Mr. Lambert who was creeping round the room with his hands in his pockets, doing, what he called the honors. So Horace had something

to say when he came to his elbow ; for he knew his replies would matter little ; and besides, at a stretch, he could attend to two things at the same moment.

“ Who is she to be married to ? ”

“ I do not know the gentleman’s name ; but you may depend on the truth of my statement. ”

“ *Diable !* ” muttered Clayton to himself. It was his favorite expression when anything put him wrong : and he made a mistake in his play.

“ Who was your informant ? ”

“ I do not know that I am at liberty to give up her name, ” replied Mrs. Witworth, with a very diplomatic sort of toss with her head. “ Besides which, we have not got the story quite right. Some say the gentleman never has been here. Others, that she was seen walking twice up and down the beach the day before yesterday, with a remarkably fashionable looking young man. I did not see it myself, but I can depend upon my informant. ”

“ Really ! ”



“ Yes, and you are aware how particular the Lamberts are known to be.”

“ Really !”

“ Yes, really ; twice up the beach ; and such a thing as this, is not to be contradicted in a moment.”

Horace felt a weight taken off his mind, it this was all ; for he knew it had been him elf who had been seen walking with Bessie on the promenade the day mentioned. So he coolly hummed a tune over his cards ; and the words were, in a *patois* sort of French,

“ La, vu tout pres d'un ormeau  
Lorgnant un ~~soir~~ gente figure ;  
Pour cette fois la chose est sûre,  
Oh ! oui je vous le jure,  
Tralalala, tralala, la,  
J'étais cette figure là.”

The conceit quite charmed Horace. If it was a delight to take in the knowing ones, what was it not to take in his partner ? She was, however, in a talkative mood : and liking

to hear what she could possibly have to say about Bessie, and still feeling somewhat uneasy as to that which he had heard concerning her engagement, he let Mrs. Witworth talk on ; so he appeared intently occupied with his game, and uttered not a word himself to interrupt her observations.

“ I wonder you do *au solitaire*, Mr. Clayton,” she said, drawing down her face, and looking serious herself, with an attempt at speaking french. “ It is not, I suspect, your general habit ?”

“ I was listening to your—your—Mrs. Witworth,” he replied, hesitating for a word.

“ My what ?”

He longed to say croaking ; but he checked himself, and said “ conversation.”

“ I think Miss Bessie Smith a very nice girl ; do not you ?” asked Miss Dobbs, leaning towards Horace in a confidential manner.

“ So very quiet and unassuming,” chimed in Mrs. Witworth.

“ Ugh !” ejaculated Horace ; taking a pinch of snuff with the same velocity a lucifer match might be expected to take it with.

“ What an intolerable flirt her friend is ! I never did see such a conceited thing.”

“ As unbearable as her boisterous brothers and sisters. I do pity poor Mrs. Atherton.”

“ There is no necessity for it,” replied Horace with as careless an air as he could assume, under the idea of such as these, fancying they were called on to pity Mrs. Atherton. And when he thought of her, revelling at home among her children, and the difference of her seated now, like a wax figure at Madame Tassaude’s, he settled how much they must mistake the thing. So he took an extra pinch of snuff, which would sometimes settle all his grievances.

“ They are very rude children ! you know them best, Mr. Clayton,—very rude, I should say ?”

Horace might have agreed with her, had he thought himself called upon to find fault with

his neighbours; but he even took another pinch of snuff; and as the matter did not very much concern him, of how Mrs. Atherton's children were brought up, this pinch was taken tranquilly.

"I wonder you do not get married, Mr. Clayton."

"I should wonder more if I did."

"And yet there are plenty of young ladies here who would suit you." This was said by Miss Dobbs.

"They have given you to one of them," observed Mrs. Witworth, "what do you say to Miss Maltravers?"

Horace bowed, and professed he would rather be excused.

"Why, she is a very nice girl."

"A very nice girl."

"The eldest is the most agreeable."

"Very clever."

"She is very clever, I understand."

"Very clever."

“ Why, how you agree with me in every thing.”

“ I cannot help agreeing in such self evident truths.”

“ Then why do you not take one of them ?”

“ I do not suppose they would take me ?”

“ Oh, I do not know.”

“ Oh, I do not know.”

“ Oh, I do not know,” was muttered from the three cardinal points of the card table ; as though when called upon, they had no idea of committing themselves by giving an opinion.

“ But they are rich ? there is plenty of money there, I should think,” observed Mrs. Witworth, the first to renew the subject.

• “ Yes, rich ; but I must have something better than money.”

“ What is that ?”

“ Blood. I shall be very particular—I hope,” and the “ hope,” came in rather as a codicil to a good resolution ; but he continued, “ Do you know of any young lady, from six-

teen to twenty—not a day older—well born, and very well bred—for these two things will be indispensable : if you can find such as this, why, say a good word for me.”

Mrs. Witworth shuffled the cards harder than she had ever shuffled them before ; and placing them before Horace, she with her lips drawn as thin as wires, said,

“ You can cut deep, sir, I see.”

He did not intend to have hit so hard ; but the cap fitted, and he was not in a humour to divest her of it. Low born and indifferently bred, she was his aversion ; besides he had owed her a grudge one at the beginning of the evening : and he settled they were now quits. The game was done. And Mrs. Lambert was standing before a large tray, screwing up her mouth, and neighing a sort of neigh she got up when requiring some polite assistance, so Horace was by her side in a moment. She did not much like him, but she wanted her sandwiches handed,

and he glavly started off with a plate in each hand.

“ Go where glory waits thee.”

But Horace preferred passing all the dowagers, and rushed up to the corner where the little coterie he loved best were sitting, with Mrs. Lambert after him, to call him to some order ; but when arrived, he dashed his two plates down on a chair, finding his friends too occupied to eat ; so seating himself on another, both his mission, Mrs. Lambert and all the other ladies were very soon forgotten.

It was strange that when all else were giddy around, Bessie's manners appeared stiff and precise ; but so natural and unsophisticated was she, that when formality was the order of the time being, she was the only one at her ease. Therefore whilst every one else were biting their sandwiches as though they were suffering under the malady of a lock-jaw, and crooking

the little fingers with the extreme unction of a convulsion fit, Horace found her in all the gracefulness of her happy nature, eating, and laughing with perfect unconcern; and even a little quizzing at command for his own serious face. It was very attractive, but he saw his chance was gone, as matters now stood; and never to be regained, unless some turn of the wheel of fate—some bold stroke of his own—could reinstate him in that blest position, he did think, and without flattery, he had once possessed in her favor.

He knew what Bessie would be under the influence of love—the allsubduing power! or he fancied he knew it; and which to him at the moment, was very nearly the same thing. He therefore bitterly lamented the course he had pursued, which to all appearance as the thing now was, had cast this love from him. Acting upon an irritable impulse of the moment, a vindictive observation of Mrs. Lambert's—for he took upon himself now to affirm,



that Bessie was no more engaged to be married than he was engaged, not half so much, perhaps; for he had got his own consent: she evidently had not. Oh, how sick and sad he felt, when he would for a moment take the full extent of his *contre temps* into his mind! It had sunk him in his own esteem, and must humble him in the opinion of his friend; who would naturally suspect he had over-rated the position in which he had stood, in talking of his hopes and his fears; for it was all pretty plain now, there was no scope for exaggerating the one, or battling with the other; he assured himself once for all, Bessie had made up her mind to have nothing particular to say to him.

Well, then, he must look round on the other side the question, and see what he had got in exchange. He did look; and resolved in a moment that Miss Atherton was no bad string of his bow to fall back upon. If she had not the natural graces of Bessie Smith, she had un-

questionably more acquired ones ; there was an air of fashion about her, that on the spur of the moment he decided, Bessie never would attain : would it be an advantage to her if she did ? He was not quite sure ; but this he did know, it was very becoming, and sat very well upon Miss Atherton.

So he watched her narrowly whilst he was settling these conclusions in her favor ; and again his tranquillity was disturbed ; he might be jealous, and so see things through a foggy medium ; he could not exactly say what did ail him ; but to his fancy, Mr. Smith seemed to have gained a better chance in that quarter than he had : and that he should have gained it so easily, for he confessed his friend had taken no undue advantage, only made him the more keenly indulge in his unsettling ruminations.

With all these feelings afloat, and which he had brought with him from the whist table, it

was no wonder the ladies there had found him the porcupine we have lately described him : for ever bobbing his head between, what he termed “ their outrageous looking bonnets,” to see what was going on between the little party attracted together on the sofa ; and he said to himself, in the words of Dr. Caius, for he could not but remark the steady and noble bearing of his friend—

“ What shall de honest man do in my closet ? Dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.” And yet watch him as closely as he would, *foi de gentilhomme*, Henry was doing nothing : he was merely listening to what Miss Atherton had to say, Bessie and he playing the same part of listeners. He was always listening : and as Madame du Deffand said of St. Lambert’s *Saisons*, *sans les oiseaux, les ruisseaux, les haumeaux, les ormeaux, et leur rameaux, il aurait bien peu de choses a dire* : so with Henry Smith ; but for his teeth his eyes, his smile (which spoke volume), and a sudden look up he had from the ground,

shaking back his hair as he did it, which was death in itself—he would have been nothing.

Next a lover with a dream  
 'Neath his waking eye-lids hidden,  
 And a frequent sigh unbidden  
       \*       \*       \*       \*  
 And a silence that is made  
 Of a word he dares not say,  
 Shaking slow his pensive head.

Had it not been for this, Horace could not but confess he would have been a perfect stick. But he did not take into his account (for men are as little able to decide upon the thing that really does please in themselves, as women can the one of the other) the superiority there seemed in his friend to all pretensions—all coquetry—and the total surrender of himself to those who *chose* to make the agreeable to him. So as Bessie did not, or could not choose so to do, he fell as surely to the property of Miss Atherton, as a bird is said to fall, fascinated by the eye of a serpent.

It was perfectly evident therefore to Horace, that there was no necessity for his friend's talking, whilst Miss Atherton was disposed to make herself so agreeable; and though he did not expect him to stand, "as really neutral as a grocer's shop," as a clever man once observed, speaking of the Mechanics' Institution, yet he had never taken it into his idea, that Henry might prove to him a dangerous rival; for though he knew the law of the land forbade his marrying the two young ladies at the same time, yet surely it was his place, persuaded into society in the manner he had been, at least to have waited, and to have contented himself with the one not selected by the friend who had brought him forward.

He had thought the hearts of young ladies were reached through their ears—talking himself thirteen to the dozen—and thereby setting down Henry as a safe man. He should have recollected the heart is taken in any way, rather than by the high turnpike road; per-

on— influence us—voices subdue us—and look—  
 as the noble Surrey says, melt us—

How soon a look can print a thought,  
 That never may remove."

Many a man will live and die upon a look—  
 ay, and women too have been known to sell  
 their lives at this sorry market. Miss Ather-  
 ton was bidding fair to become a martyr to  
 some such sort of death—if a flirt so can die?  
 We are disposed to doubt it.

The question has been asked, what is the  
 interpretation of the term "flirt." We should  
 say it describes one who loves nobody so well  
 as herself: and it is to satisfy this self, all  
 who approach her must be charmed. Any  
 one standing between her and this desire, is an  
*infra dig*: offered to self—a defeat of self.  
 She will have all, or none. "With thy shield,  
 or on thy shield," as the Spartan mother said

to her warrior son ; so as she does not mean to die, her province is to conquer

And Miss Atherton had the powers of pleasing to the utmost echo. It mattered little to her whether a man could talk or not : she had soon decided that Mr. Henry Smith could not talk. *N'importe* : there was the less chance of her own silver tones being disturbed in the conversing with him—at him—and for him. And how agreeable and animated he seemed to her, when, in fact, it was she who was animated—she who made herself so agreeable. There was nothing wanting, not even a more prolonged sound of Mr. Smith's voice ; all was made up with her own fascination.

But Henry Smith's thoughts were his own all the time : his eyes, his looks, his smiles, and his teeth, might be hers ; but his thoughts—were they to be squandered away upon the best bidder ? Oh, no, though chafed in their course, they still ran on in one true channel—

one deep track—and he would even quail to himself at the bare thought of their being discovered. It was a battle of duty he had with his very self—a skirmish built upon an idle dream; and he kindled with a conscious glow, as his fair companion brought round her words to closely describe (how she had managed it he hardly knew) the kind of woman it would, and that it would not suit him to have for a wife; the latter being a very true resemblance of Bessie Smith; the former an exact picture of herself. And Miss Atherton waited gracefully for his reply; yet getting nothing but the laugh and the peculiar jerk back of his head: the eyes were shaded by the deep, dark fringe, or she might have seen a tear there, by the way of further ornament—intrusive as an episode---and in no way relevant to her agreeable subject. And yet there was a saddened look upon her hearer's face, which she detected in a moment: she saw that she had



touched a string that grated upon his feelings, but to her this mattered not; she took it merely as a token of her triumph; and secure in what she had done, she called Bessie towards her, and asked her if she understood the language of flowers?

Bessie did not; but Mrs. Lambert had a book.

“Then fetch it, Bessie,” and Bessie did as she was bid. Miss Atherton laid her *bouquet* on her lap and took the book in her hand: and it was just at this moment that Horace made his approach: dashing down his plate of sandwiches on a chair that stood near—seating himself in another—to the only relief Mrs. Lambert had, who thought to see him place himself upon them; then wheeling his seat so as to form the principal object in the *partié carrée*, he passed over *sub silentio* all Mrs. Lambert’s exclamations of “well I do think!” and “upon my honor!” and was as much given up

to the interest of the discussion, as though never expected by his hostess to give his time to any other service.

“Constancy,” Miss Atherton said, taking up a flower; and which was in a moment jerked aside, with a very pretty and effective turn up of the nose---

What have I to do with thee,  
Dull unjoyous constancy?

I will have none of it: certainly not this evening. Dead leaves for Mr. Clayton;” putting a drooping sprig of verbena in his hand---“dead leaves express melancholy---you should have seen your countenance at the card table!”

“Or yours: that would have renovated me. But tell me, what does verbena express? *enchantment.*”

Miss Atherton bowed.

“And you, Mr. Smith; here is a white rose

for you: do take it, it suits you so well: it says "silence." You *are* very silent: that is, you do not speak. You put words out of fashion: you do so well without them."

It was now Mr. Smith's turn to bow.

"And Bessie shall have a violet."

"No she shall not:" said Horace, snatching at a sprig of myrtle, "she shall have this *from me*," laying a mighty stress upon the word. "from *me*, Miss Smith:" and he put it in her hand. "You will see by it, that I know the language of flowers better than any one of you. take it, and trust to me. All the combinations of poetry—all the deductions of logic—of mathematics—are nothing to the one word this graceful bit of myrtle will express. All thought—all hope—all fear is in them concentrated: reply to it, Miss Smith: there are many flowers in Miss Atherton's *bouquet* that will help out conjecture and kill despair. Ay: take the book, even if you please—see what it will teach you to say."

Bessie looked at the myrtle she held, then at the other flowers he proffered her: and with a child-like good temper, and anxiety to know what it meant, she said—

“ I cannot reply to you, Mr. Clayton, till I know the question: tell me that, and I will answer it if I can, directly.”

The little group all seemed aware of the trap he was laying for her, and there was a silence awaiting her reply. Clayton did not like this publicity, be her answer whatever it might: but he had gone too far to retreat: so he must even let it go on. He could not stop the mirth at a moment's notice: and Bessie was amused as the rest: so he let her take the book and helped her to turn over the leaves till she came to the word. She looked at it first eagerly, then steadily: and then her lip curled as she repeated the word “ love!” and again she exclaimed over it, saying “ love!” as though even seeing it, she could hardly credit the folly. The answer was given the moment

she really understood it. She threw the myrtle on the ground. It was all done in a moment : and even in this moment the toe of her little silk slipper crushed it, as though it had been a venomous insect.

Who would have thought that Bessie would have shown, in so decided a manner, the opinion she had, of what she considered the mockery of an unfeeling man ? Certainly not Horace. He stood as one petrified : and was glad of the general move, which relieved him, in a measure from his awkward position.

There was not much mistake, both the friends were disposed to agree, to the measures Bessie had taken to reply to the pleadings of Horace's passion. It was strange that one so timid and gentle should have acted so positive a part ; but it was evident she had lost sight of herself in the feeling, whatever it might be, that the unexpected gallantry had produced.

" You cast your thoughts and aspirations too high," was Henry's casual observation to some

remark of his friend's in their way home.

"Miss Smith, I should think is not very easily won."

"That is very true, *mon ami*," retorted Horace, rather nettled by the disqualifying sense it implied; "but what is there to keep one, in this respect, from grasping at the moon? We can all *talk* the thing very well ---very well indeed! But 'if sack and sugar be a sin;' then, Master Hal, 'God help the wicked' "

## CHAPTER IX.

ON the friends meeting the next morning, Henry Smith was even more silent than usual : whilst Horace, to all intents and purposes, appeared evidently to be pettish, disconcerted and unhappy. He had settled in his own mind, that he had plenty to be discontented about : so he talked to himself, huffing round his shoulder at Henry, and protesting, as plainly as shoulder could protest, that it was of no avail looking to him for either consolation or amusement.

So he talked to himself; expressing his thoughts aloud, as they do in dramatic representations on the stage; and he said, "Another week gone.....and a night: and here I am, not any forwarder? No, not one bit, than I was a month ago." He walked up and down the room with his hands in his pocket; meandering his toe about the hearth rug so as to place it smooth, the exertion at the same time costing him more spitish words than the tidy fit was worth.

He was a solitary being, he said, with an upbraiding look at Henry,—and did not like solitude:—a conversational animal—here another look,—and had nobody even to tell it to: consequently, for want of better company, he must tell it to himself.

He thought here he should get some 'extenuation. But no: Henry was rustling over the leaves of a new quarterly review. So Horace took up his flute, and played a few



bars. It was one of the songs that Bessie sung. Henry said,

“Oh, Gads! Horace, what are you about?”

He took it as a bad compliment to his play : and with the air of a very docile martyr laid down the flute.

“Ponto.” The dog came to his master’s call, “*You* like the flute, Ponto?” The animal looked in his master’s face : he could not speak, or he would have given his opinion ; and most likely asked his master, what it was disturbed him. He now only expressed the question with his eyes, and they shewed more intelligence than many people’s, who pique themselves on appearing sagacious.

“You are the only creature that cares for me, Ponto.”

Henry looked up from his book. He had always the most benign expression in the world ; so Horace settled *that* went for nothing. But even Ponto shook his head, evidently as

though he did not believe what his master had averred ; neither did Horace believe it ; but he was in a sombre fit.

“ Ponto, I am cross.”

The dog wagged his tail.

“ Give me up, as every body does. Go and lie far away from me—far---far.” The dog came nearer---not understanding his sentiment.

“ I say---down.”

The dog did as he was bid ; but he watched his master. He did not speak, as we have before explained, but his brown, wistful eyes still asked what was the matter with him. Horace stood with his back to the fire place---for fire there was none ;---men have a trick of it when they are disturbed. There were some fine curling shavings falling like a torrent over the bars ; and these would have burned well ; but as it has been said, there was no fire. Yet still Horace took the tails of his coat through his arms the same ; and he said, “ *diable !*” with even some of his usual impetuosity.

There was no reply to this : and he really began to think he had the room, and his conversation, and all to himself : so he threw himself on the sofa---a sofa apparently made up of a carpenter's bag of tools, rather than spring paddings ; and Horace did not even let this escape him ; but said,

“ Every thing is rough---rugged---and uncomfortable at a bachelor's. Fancy, Hal, I was advised last night to get married ! It is very odd that people cannot mind their own concerns without troubling themselves with their neighbours : some folks suppose I have no business : for my part I have plenty ;---More than I can well manage.” And here his extended foot played an impatient tat-too over the sofa's edge, implying the puzzle it was to get through all his avocations. “ And oh, that horrid Mrs. Witworth ! How well she would become the tripe and mutton shop in which she was born ! How ugly she is !” And here he took a pinch of snuff, evidently to fortify himself

against the picture he had recalled to his recollection. "By the way, there is no end to some women's assurance ! that old Miss Dobbs wondered why I took snuff. What *can* she have to do with it ? I wish she would let me give her some." And there was a vicious screw of his finger and thumb together as he said it, that explained the position she would be in. It was evident neither Miss Dobbs nor Mrs. Witworth were favorites with him. Men do not like the affairs of their hearts---to say nothing of their noses---to be meddled with ; and it is a trick old women have of recommending themselves. But the scene still went on, enlivened by the creaking of the sofa, and the wearying tat-too ; and Horace said,

"Every body has his weakness, and we can none of us judge of ourselves ; yet I do not think I flatter myself when I say, I should make a good husband. The curse which fell upon man did not extend to his living alone : we inflict this on ourselves. The question is,

whether I am deceiving myself in thinking Bessie Smith still retains some predilection for me?—I say ‘*retains*,’ from the certainty I once possessed, that I was not indifferent to her. Come Henry ; if it is not making too free with your time, what think you ?”

There was evidently no wish in the person addressed, to answer to this question ; but being applied to, even again, by another, “ Come Hal ?” he could no longer continue his hesitation, and he therefore said,

“ You surely have not outslept the recollection of last night ? What could be more explicit than such a reply—it spoke more than a thousand words could have done. And you know Miss—thing—what is her name ? does not deal in words. Catch at a straw, my friend, if you like ; but don’t expect me to catch at it with you—deceive yourself

but fancy not that I can follow you under the same fit of delusion. It may be peculiarly ungrateful to your palate, I grant you, the telling you the truth; therefore unless you can stand it, Horace, why do you ask me?"

"I will tell you why; I fancy you think more of Bessie—'Miss thing,' as you call her, than you are willing for me to suspect you do. You may not be aware of it, but you spend a great deal of the evening by her side. She may not discover it, but I am ever detecting sly glances. Now it is natural to suppose you may know something of her sentiments in all this: she says little, it is true, yet she does talk at times. I saw her speaking to you last night: so let us to the point at once,—my dear fellow does she ever say anything about me?"

The speech was long enough for Henry to recover a little the confusion the commencement had, somehow or another put him in. He,

with the most consummate clumsiness, threw down a box of coins he had grasped at, much to Horace's torment, in the midst of it. The picking them up accounted for the increased colour in his face ; leaving him deadly pale when the trouble was ended : but he was then prepared to reply ; and he said,

“ I can safely say, your name has never passed her lips. Yet it might be my fault, and therefore no guide ; for so far, a monosyllable has been the extent of any conversation that I have yet managed to get up between us.”

“ But with Miss Atherton it is different ?”

“ So far only, that she talks to me. I merely reply yes, and no ; and seem, I dare say, very well pleased : and that is enough,---too much,---if she takes it for granted. Horace, you have often been beating round a certain detestable bush. I am a pinioned man,---walking about with a wife cut out for me---hanging round my neck :---all is marked out---there is no

choice for me left—I fear. You have long wanted this confession from me ; and now you have it.”

This speech had come, in the way thunder sometimes comes—clap—clap—clap—quite unexpected ; and Horace shook himself at the suddenness of it ; and felt ashamed for even having betrayed to his companion that he had any curiosity upon the subject. He now saw, from the pain the confession had evidently occasioned, that be it what it might, it was no joke : and he pitied his friend : at the same time, it was a relief to his own mind he could not but acknowledge. It put him in good spirits ; and he observed,

“ If you want to make a clean heart of it, write a sonnet ; that is the key with which our wisest men have unlocked and healed their woe. I have too much business on my hands to trouble you for your confidence, Hal, just at present. You look monstrous dismal about it : if there is anything to be done in the way of



help, you know where to come." Henry shook his head. "What ! so bad as that ?"

"Yes quite as bad." But this was expressed with a smile ; and he continued, "forget what I have said, Horace ; let it pass from your mind, in the way I try to chase it from my own. We can neither of us do any good by thinking about it." This was uttered in his usual tranquil tone ; and he threw down his book as he said, "It is your wish to engage yourself ; my desire is to get free. *Allons donc* : let us up to the top of that lofty summit :—

' Hills quèstioning the heavens for light  
 Ravines too deep to scan !  
 As if the wild earth mimicked there  
 The wilder heart of man :  
 Only it shall be greener far  
 And gladder than hearts ever are.'

But never mind that ; we will make the best of it we can ; at any rate it will cool my head, and your heart ; and you can from thence look down upon the casket that holds your plague and albeit your pleasure."

“ I’ll do more than look down,” said Horace in a tone of decision, “ I’ll go to Mrs. Ather-ton’s, where I know Bessie generally is at this hour, and by speaking plainly to her, at once decide my fate, either one way or the other.”

“ ‘ Be by your friends advised,’ says the old song.”

“ No: I’ll know my doom.”

“ Liberty and the hills,” shouted Henry, already some paces up the steep.

Horace shook his head.

“ Better listen to the larks.”

Horace put his hat upon his stick, and waved it in the air, for he was already nearly out of ear-shot.

Then came several long strides more, and Henry was half way up the ascent. Horace again raised his hat as he turned down the lane that led him from the heath, whilst the undulating handkerchief of his friend, seemed from the summit to proclaim his triumph. Again a look—again a wave. Horace was lost amid the

unbrageous foliage of the lane; and Henry Smith felt all the relief of being alone.

Alone on that wild height! where all nature seemed to rejoice and triumph,—looking down below on the petty works of that puddling creature man—so proud in himself—so mistaken in his wisest craft. Hemming himself in with crumbling walls that serve to bind him to his woes—pasting—painting—patching. For this he plies his daily toil—busily at work—contriving and manœuvring to gain his ends,—a larger prison-house, and more jailor servants. For this is all the rising betimes and so late taking rest; and nature is left to look on and laugh at the mistaken creature, that so cankers her blithest spots of lands. Unheeded are her hills and her dales; for preferment must choose the pavement. But these things are familiar to us, and we see not the waste we make of heaven's best gifts. For ourselves, we think the very sun must wonder, as he, with inquisitorial glance, breaks in upon us, and looks to

see what we are about. What does he find us doing? Shutting him out with blinds, because his rays will fade the gorgeous flowers our looms and carpet weavers have brought forth; and sitting shivering at our fires, preferring to live amid these painted things, the work of human hands, rather than walk forth, and take a lesson from what He, the all powerful, if he wills it, can produce. No, we verily believe, neither the Ethiopian, the tiger, nor the tame animal, yclept man, can ever be warned out of the natural colouring of their natures,—even from the fig leaf downwards.

And yet it is impossible to get over the unworthy entanglements that enthrall poor human nature; supposing us willing to get out, we cannot do it: the wheel within wheel—the produce of our own craft, is much too powerful for us. Occupations—engagements—all help to tie us down tighter and more tight, to wherever we have chosen to pitch our tent: tent, good lack! see to what a height our civilised

nature has come ! and there is many a man who would willingly strike, pack all his bricks and mortar on his back, and be off: weary of the burden his accumulating propensities have entailed upon him. But it is too late: he is hedged in, as we have said, between his four massive walls, and here he must remain working on, till he shifts off his mortal coil to his next successor.

Henry Smith was in a mood for thinking — and reflecting upon what Archdeacon Manning has said, and which touched upon the very subject of his cogitations. “ If it were possible for us to begin life over again, and to lay it out upon some definite and carefully adjusted plan, we might avoid the entanglements of the world. But almost every one of us already finds himself fully implicated in the embarrassments of life, and involved in a multitude of interior attachments before he is well aware. What, then, is to be done? We cannot withdraw ourselves: one has

wealth, another a family, a third rank and influence, another a large business; and all these bring with them an endless variety of duties and offices, and usages of custom and courtesy. If a man is to break through all these, he must needs go out of the world. All this is very true; but at the same time, it is certain that every one of us *might reduce his life to a greater simplicity*. In every position in life there is a great multitude of unnecessary things which we may readily abandon, if we were to examine carefully the objects on which we bestow time, and money, and thought, and earnestness, we should find many that are purely artificial. Many things we do, only because others have done them before us---many by mere passive imitation. We are all ever ready to combine many characters, or pursuits, or offices together, to make heavier our own burdens: we learn to form exaggerated judgments of the worth and importance of things from other men; and all

this gathers into a worldliness of character, and overspreads our mind, fearfully oppressing the religious life within us.

Now, they are happiest who are most discharged from contact with the world; who can sit like Mary at the Lord's feet without distraction. But they are very few to whom this scarce and solitary lot is given. 'The great multitude of men are so interwoven in the tangled maze of relations and duties, that they must take the burden with the blessing: and yet even they would find that they are suffering their heart to be divested and impoverished, and their affections to be dulled and deteriorated by entanglements with many things from which a little boldness and decision would set them free. All that is not necessary may be cast off, but our unwariness, or our own free choice, has encumbered us with it; and it is in our hands to undo it again.'

These were Henry's reflections as he looked

down on the pretty vale, crouched at the base of the hill on which he stood. Then he thought of the young ladies; and he knew exactly what they were about; losing the brightness of the day in tapestry work,—fabricating glowing flowers, stitch by stitch, upon their high-backed chairs; whilst the bank of moss, the primrose, and the violet that nature had prepared, was for this pursuit neglected:—

“ Their bells and flowrets of a thousand hues,—  
Ye valleys low, where the wild whispers rise,  
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,  
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparsely looks.  
Then hither all your quaint enamelled eyes  
That on the green turf seek the honey'd showers,  
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies;  
The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine;  
The white pink and the pansy freckled with jet;  
The glowing violet;  
The musk rose, and the well-attired woobine,  
With cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head,  
And every flower that sad embroidery wears.”

But this is not enough for the young ladies of our day: and who can read these lines without having, as it were, these flowers brought into



our hearts? but no: they must embroider for themselves.

“ I cannot walk to day, Mrs. Lambert, I have so much to do: look at these flowers—who could leave them?” So spoke Bessie Smith, in an ill used piteous tone of voice. But the look was lost on Mrs. Lambert, who had helped to rule, in her day, a whole school full of boys; and she replied—

“ But you *must* go, my dear; so let me see all the work put away, and the bonnet tied on: come, come, we never allow young people to be idle, so get yourself ready at once: we never allow of sloth—so come, get ready, my dear.”

So Bessie very methodically covered up her work, for it was nothing new to her to have no will of her own: she felt sorry to be disturbed in counting her stitches, and perhaps in indulging, at the same time, in the innocent recreation of counting her chickens, long—long—before it was their likelihood to be

hatched: but these thoughts were to herself; outwardly she was ready to do whatever Mrs. Lambert willed, so she said—

“ Well, I dare say a walk will do me all the good in the world ; it is so silly to stay at home such a sweet day as this : and you will go too ? ”

“ I wish I could : but I really have so much to do.” Then after considering a little—“ No. I cannot stir now, besides you will do exactly as well. I merely want you to call at the cottage on the hill : you cannot have a better walk. Go the field way there, and return by the road : and then, if I find a moment to spare, I may come out and meet you on your return.”

Mr. Lambert was present ; and very little was ever said, but what he had always to repeat a long quotation from some book, which he had been put in mind of, adapting his memory to the comprehension of his listener<sup>s</sup> and he now begged Miss Bessie's permission

to repeat to her a few lines, very applicable to her present position :—

“ Now quick the maid pursued her way,  
And heedless trifled the live long day ;  
Nor had she passed the lonely wood,  
When lo ! the wolf king near her stood ?”

It was said in the regular school master swing and emphasis, such as he would have taught his boys of a break-up-day to have said it in ; and simple Bessie really was frightened : so to hide this weakness, she ran off, ashamed to confess it, yet vexed with herself that amidst all the beauties of her walk—the bright broom, the waxy heath, and the craggy path, the terrific knell of Mr. Lambert’s words still rung in her ears :—

‘ When lo ! the wolf king near her stood.’

‘ The very donkeys that were grazing among the furze seemed even to dart up their long ears, and to contemplate her with unlooked for ferocity ; and yet it was all so calm ! for there was no sound but the lark singing above, and

the soothing tone of the splash of the waves below—yet the very stillness helped to frighten her. But what nonsense it was to be frightened after all! She wanted to think of something else: she had no patience with people alarming her so: she wished to see and to feel nothing but the natural beauties which so thickly on every side presented themselves. For Bessie, though not looking on it with a poet's eye, had her own simple way of appreciating nature. She might not be able to express her admiration, or to cite passages from our best poets to help her describe this admiration, as Mr. Lambert would have done: yet Bessie could not pass the beauties in her walk, without feeling and loving them. And Bessie did more; she had a little word to say to Him—the giver of all these good things.

And the way-side flowers, suggested what to her were deep thoughts, reaching far within her breast, touching even to her heart—thoughts that made her pause, and wonder

what would be the end of all? And then she felt pettish under the anxieties that pressed upon her. Bessie pettish! she did not know herself. "Neither would mama know me," she whispered, so as just to hear the words she uttered. "Her Bessie dear, in love! Oh, never—never could she for one moment think it!" Neither could she ever tell her so; and then in her simplicity she settled, that such being the case, she would never know it.

This was a point determined: but yet the conclusion did not satisfy Bessie. Her affections plagued her: too precious to be cast aside: yet, what good could they ever do her? She should soon be absent from all she loved---miles apart. What a varying of fate was this! the home she had torn herself from, she now looked upon as a weary desert---a groping in darkness—with nothing but mama to cheer her;—*her* eyes would smile, and that would be all. All? And Bessie fretted herself to the top of the

hill ; one moment deploring her lot ; the next, taking herself to task for her folly.

And where did we leave Henry Smith ? upon this very hill : sick of himself---of the world and all its emptiness---bitterness---and folly : fretting, also, out a weary pilgrimage of a yet but half spent life : loathing his early recollections---shrinking from his name : even fortune, in listening to his prayers, had saddled him with one, (if he chose to take her, and which he decidedly did not) as lowly---as disgustingly born as himself :---a shadowy promise of a blasting alternative.

“ Well, well,” he said, as he threw himself down on the very edge of the precipice, and which seemed a position much more hazardous than it really was ; for to those who had the courage to look below, there were jutting rocks and brambles, and even a little plot of potato ground,---each serving to break a fall, had such an event occurred : it was bad enough---but just not quite so bad as it looked to be. “ Well,

well, there is some good in many of our worst mischances. Horace is off to know his doom : and it is a fitful moment ; but I am, at least, rid, for a time, of mirth---when smiles are about as easy to me as sight is to the blind. Oh, the weariness of trying to seem happy ! when every word uttered, pitches the heart upon a thorn ! I must be less hard hit, than I fancy myself, even one moment—one short moment—to stand it.” It was a lamentable case ; dreading every word that might come next ; and concealing his torment by seeming grave, dull, and stupid ; even deafness would be preferable : everything seemed easier to bear, than the difficulty under which he suffered. It was a chequered life he led : Horace’s volatility, and his own spleen, exciting him to torture---his entangled lot---his dependant state---his detestable secret wearing him out by inches.

And then his thoughts all rolled into a softer channel ; and as love begets poetry, so did his feelings take an imaginative turn ; and he said :—

“ What though the hunter fly,  
The stricken stag bleeds on :  
The impression that thou leav’st upon my soul  
Lies there so deep, so lively and so full,  
‘That memory recalls no other thought,  
But only one---and only love of thee.”

‘This was pretty near the mark, though uttered in romance upon the top of a high and wild hill; looking down upon the sea : and vain was it for Henry even to go up there to escape the vision that perplexed him. It danced upon his book when giving himself up to study ; and even here---high up in the clear, pure breeze, it pressed upon his heart—an aching joy—a thrilling grief—he would have given worlds to have been quit of it : and yet dreaded the poor thing he then should be---the mere heap of clay, if once he consented to root it out and to separate himself from it : the secret spring of joy he drank from all day long—a poison he cherished in his veins---consuming him in its very ecstasy.

He was in a bad way, and he would not be



cured. He spurned the safe and sure---he hugged his risks---his lack of repose. It was all making bad worse, he knew ; and that was the best of it. He had now a point to refer his decision upon : how could he marry one, whilst he wholly and solely loved another ? The thing was incompatible. He had no idea of tinkering himself up with the fillagree of wealth, setting, as it were, a counterfeit jewel. He would rather have the creature he loved, and work for his bread. Men talk of work so readily. He saw no reason why the virtue of his love should not thus make sacrifice, and so proclaim itself.

He saw a vessel upon the sea, looking like a cockle-shell, yet all her sails set. And he thought of a distant land, and for she---the one thing---the pearl of price---to consent to accompany him thither---to enjoy the blessings they took with them---the blessing of each other : comforting themselves with their abundance. Surely this was a positive good ? independence

in its very dependency: an Eden in itself: there to pass his life, and to serve her as her slave; it was almost asking for too much bliss—expecting too much happiness.

The thought gained strength within his mind. But first he must go through the tormenting ordeal of hearing what his friend had to say—to support his describing the every circumstance of his visit. It was an enviable quality—he settled—to be able silently to bear so much pain: and yet hope whispered, the return of his friend would be as silent a triumph, perhaps & badly to be endured; leaving the feelings of the heart pent up, or to run over unnoticed: shielding it all—hope and joy—under some fretful plaint, pretending to be spiteful to hide the real state of things, when he could willingly have clasped his companion to his heart, and begged for his congratulations.

He was thinking of all this, close to the edge of the cliff—his elbows resting on his knees—

his face buried in his hands—when a gentle voice struck upon his ear. It seemed like a dream. But it said in very undreamy and animated tone,

“Mr. Smith, pray come from the edge of the cliff; why can you sit so near? do come further back, I beseech you! It quite frightens me—it would alarm any one, I do assure you, to see you.”

And there stood Bessie Smith at a little distance, wringing her hands and looking most persuasively piteous; so much so, that Henry wished himself still nearer the edge, in a more hazardous position still, to elicit even more of interest; he had almost a thought of hurling himself down; thinking it a happy moment to die, under such an extreme manifestation of anxiety. But he did not. He even settled there was something worthy to live for; so he arose: Bessie still standing in breathless anxiety, and still continuing her exhortation that he would take care; uttered in the softest

voice, just raised above its usual tone: "pray take care—do, Mr. Smith, I beg of you take care." She would have seen there was no danger had she come to the spot where he was: but she stood at a distance, pressing her clasped hands against her breast; her lips parted and hardly seeming to breathe.

It was soon explained how she came there; she had seen him from the garden of the cottage, and not feeling at all happy about him (as she expressed it,) had come up the remainder of the steep to warn him of his danger: "for," as she said, "had I, when I got home, heard that you had fallen, and were dead: I should have felt unhappy all my life—because—because—you know—I might, by cautioning you, have prevented it."

Our readers have no doubt gleaned, if accustomed to this style of writing, which in the plenitude of its purveyance of amusement, puts up obstacles merely to have the pleasure of putting them down again; that these were the two

cousins the will<sup>\*</sup> of Henry Smith had arranged were to marry together. As for Bessie, she was quite in the dark about the whole of the matter: but Henry, with one of his wits, even in the right<sup>\*</sup> place, might have settled the concern very much to his own satisfaction. Strange to say, however, it had never for a moment dawned upon him. He had known Miss Smiths by the dozen; all the bakers', the butchers' daughters were the Miss Smiths; but this was no reason that he was to marry them. It is true he never passed over the name of Elizabeth Smith without remarking it; but he had seen her married, in the daily journals, twenty times; and read the same number; but he never classed his Elizabeth Smith with any of these; for they were innoxious animals, compared to the one lying perdu for him in some vulgar corner or other. Smith! the very sound set his teeth on edge; he shrunk from it as from the tocsin of alarm. He had learnt to anticipate what was sure to follow every

introduction, "Smith? what Smith are you? The Smiths of A——, or the Smiths of B—— or the Smiths of C——?" and so on through all the letters of the alphabet. No, not one of these. And then the rush of blood to the face, and the sick feel at heart, whilst the wonderment was going on, that he was not allied to any of them. He knew it was often merely for the sake of something to say; but this was little mitigation to him—his pain was the same. So he hated the name; and almost wondered how Bessie could have grown up so pretty, under so ugly a 'cognomen. From whom was she sprung? He would have given worlds to have known, but dared not ask: one word on family connections always produced another: 'let the galled jade wince!' and when the name of 'Smith' was the question, Henry was galled all over. To ever acknowledge to the will was a thing he never dreamed of: he tried to forget it: and even went so far as to wish Doctors' Commons down to the

very bottomless depth of the sea, for harbouring and securing such a detestable thing against him—such a clog upon his visionary prospects of happiness, love, and marriage.

The time was, however, fast approaching when it would be requisite to let the lady know the contents of her late uncle's will, such as it was. The only clue to her abode was, "— — regiment, Rumford Barracks." The army list had been searched, and there was no Richard Smith in the regiment described. So there was no other chance of finding the delectable lady, than advertising, that the next of kin to Henry Smith, late of Broker's Alley, London, would hear of something to her advantage.

But this was the executor's concern, not his ; so Henry decided within himself that he would do nothing ; his allowance was to go on till the lady was found : and so far that had contented him. A codicil had decided this, as also the length of time to be taken before she was to be considered " dead in law ;" when the whole of

the property was to be his. The finding her married, was to be looked upon in the same light, as her declining to fulfil the specified instructions. It was a strange composition altogether: so much so, that Henry turned from it in disgust and had resolved to read for his degree. He thought a clergyman's dress well covered the plebeian—acting as a coat of mail (if its duties were properly fulfilled) against contumely and contempt. He waged war with civil life—an intestine war—for no one heard it, or so much as suspected it. He demanded, why was he born? and he looked fierce whilst he asked the question: it was put to himself, and a sigh was the only reply vouchsafed to it. And pride slays more brave hearts than the soldier's sword. Henry wished the sigh might be his last—that the grave would close him out, and place him in a neutral sort of ground, where the low may creep in, and lay them side by side by the high-born and the rich.

As it was, he settled, that his pride was the



best thing belonging to him. "God help me," he said, "if I were not proud! I should be clamorous—asking for justice to be done me—a poor tradesman's son." And here the tears would trickle down his cheeks, as though a new sorrow—not the blot under which he had been born—had fallen upon him. Birth, wealth, and fame,—these were the boons he craved. He talked to himself; and a child, even, might have turned on him his folly, by reminding him, that, "what cannot be cured, must be endured:" but Henry Smith had no idea of enduring it. A nobody and yet presume to love, humble as he was, one, in every respect, so much above him.

And by some strange chance, here this creature was, walking by his side; looking as troubled and as restless as himself; so for something to say, he observed,

"My friend Clayton is calling at your house; he will be disappointed he does not find you at home."

‘Yes,’ replied Bessie; and it was a strange answer to give. There was no clue in it to know whether she regretted the not seeing him, or no. ‘Yes,’ is such a foolish word if used out of season. But they were threading through the furze that skirted the path which wound down the hill to the cottage garden, basking in the sun upon its side: and Bessie walked so fast, he knew the pleasure of their rencontre would soon be done. What could he say to stop her progress? not a syllable would present itself,—he who had been talking to her of her  
 for her all the time he had been alone, had now not one poor word to offer her, and the little creature in sight where he knew that they must part.

The going planned better for him than he had for himself. A slight zephyr wafted some black lace trimmings in the air, to descend upon him, and settle on the canvas, and Bessie, in her infinite confusions, forgot the Wolf King, and her trepidations, for the wish to dis-

entangle it, without doing her dress any injury. So she said it was very clumsy, and that the gorse was sharp; and then reassuring herself a little, “How pretty it is! It smells so sweet—like wax. And the bees are so fond of it; they will go miles to find it.”

This was a great effort for Bessie; and she was again silent, under the satisfaction that she *had* said something. It was now Henry’s turn to make an effort; and he stooped to smell the flower that she had pointed out, and observed—

“ ‘Sweet is the hum of bees!’ as Lord Byron observes. He did not know very well what to say; so he stooped again to smell the bright looking gorse, and continued—

“It is sweet! I do not wonder it will attract the busy bee, as far as you explain it is attracted by it.”

“We have bees at home,” again volunteered Bessie, “under a warm garden wall; and it is pretty to see them flitting on from flower to

flower, with such capricious fancy, we hardly know what flower they like best; mignonette, I think, and borage; but we plant all sorts of flowers, violets, roses, and lilies."

"And yet," replied Henry, "your bees, you say, will roam to the wild tracts of furze and heath. They do not show their taste, Miss Smith; it is not everything that would fly away from you."

"No," returned Bessie; and the 'no,' was as bad as the 'yes,' for although there was something very original in these monosyllables, Henry was perfectly at a loss to understand them.

It was evident there was a perplexity now, on both sides, which was next to speak; it fell to Bessie's share, and she said—

"A heath is a sweet place to come to. I do not wonder the bees leave houses and gardens for it; how sweet all this pure air, up so high, must make the honey!"

"Mount Hymettus," said Henry, "was famous for its honey."

"Was it?" replied Bessie.

"Pliny tells of it," said Henry.

"Does he?" returned Bessie.

"Yes; you know he says the thyme that grew there was transplanted by the Roman bee-keepers into their gardens at a distance but it never flourished: it languished for the barren rocks of Attica, and the native breezes of its own blue sea."

"It showed its taste," replied Bessie.

"You like these hills, then?"

The free-born wanderer of thy mountain air!

"Indeed I do." And the wings of the bee would suit me better than the wings of the dove. I like work: and I have still some now to do; so I must call again at the cottage.

As she concluded, she turned to walk down the hill: and as she did not, in any shape, say good-bye, of course Henry walked with her.

but she hurried on: and she would soon have been there, if another gentle zephyr had not come: and again the lace and the gorse became entangled together—so Henry said, and he thought afterwards he had never made so foolish—so trifling—a speech in his life.

"You are running away from me, Miss Smith; and the gorse will not let you. It is kinder tempered than you are, with all its thorns. Clayton will have let you here long before you get home; so it is no use your being in such a hurry."

"I care not for Mr. Clayton," she replied, looking for Bessie somewhat impetuous as she said it. "He is such a tiresome man! I never think of him but to dislike him. You find him very disagreeable; do not you, Mr. Smith?"

"No, indeed I do not;" delighted with the natural fright that was shown, lest he should think she had any tender feeling towards him. "neither, I believe, is he precisely aware that you think him anything but very charming."

Here Bessie gave, not exactly a snap of her fingers, but a little flip of her third finger against one of them. It was done with infinite *naïveté* and much natural grace ; merely explaining that she gave Mr. Smith's words to the air. She said nothing ; but her hand, with her neat fitting glove, remained in its raised position ; and her eyes were steadily fixed on Henry for some moments, when she asked,

“ You do not, surely, mean to say, you think I care for Mr. Clayton ? ” And her eyes still scrutinised him as she spoke. “ *Care* for him ! ” And here she knit her brows, so seriously and unaffectedly, that Henry rather felt ashamed of having made the supposition. Then he said :

“ I have been my own deceiver, if your heart is free : I have wittingly imposed the pain upon myself of believing, that if he really proved his love, you would at once accept him.”

“ You might have saved yourself the trouble

At first I liked him very well—almost very much: but then—I found he was making light of the good will he had gained; and then—and then—”

“ And what then, Bessie?”

There is surely a sympathy in hearts that love—a quickening glow, which tells them all at once the truth;—a truth the pleasure and the pain is, even still to question, and to disbelieve. It was strange how little had made Henry the happiest man in the world. So few words had been said, but he wanted them not: and yet he desired more—more proof he was not deceived. But the gate was close at hand: and Bessie seemed to hasten to it, as to a haven. Could they have walked side by side it would have been better: but this the gorse rendered impossible: and she had collected her cloak within her hands, in such a way, there was no chance again of the black lace befriending him. But something must be advanced on his part, or all chance would be gone: so he said,



“ Miss Smith—nay I would rather say, Miss Bessie, I have something to tell you. Will you stay a moment—will you only guess it?”

“ Guessing is not quite my forte;” replied Bessie, still walking on: “ I am so stupid; and therefore I hate riddles: they puzzle me, and do not improve me.”

“ Bessie you *are* very stupid” said Henry to himself; yet not so low, but that Bessie heard him: and he then added, aloud, “ It is no riddle—no charade; it is merely a simple question: will you reply to it?”

“ I will,” said Bessie, if I can: I tell you I am very stupid; so don’t let it be a very hard one.”

“ And you will not be angry with me?”

“ Angry! no.” And she smiled at the idea of such as her being offended.”

“ Then Bessie—” still he hesitated, for he feared he was doing a presumptuous, if not an impolitic thing. What right had he to ask the private concerns of the simple girl before him?

Besides she really might be angry, though she had promised him she would not; and he prized her good opinion far too dearly to risk it. 'So he chose the alternative of looking like a simpleton. And when Bessie arrested her progress, and turned to hear what it was he had to ask, he hesitated; and then said:

"I fear I am presumptuous in even proposing such a question, you must correct me, Bessie, if my interest for you should lead me into wrong. Are you—are you—you must take me to task remember."

"Me correct you!" said Bessie with a smile, "how mama would laugh at that! Indeed I have too much work upon my hands to mend the faults in my very foolish little self—fancy my reproving yours!" and here she laughed so naturally at the bare idea of such a thing, that Henry laughed too. He was the first to cease: and said,

“ I laugh, because you laugh, Bessie ; but do you know, I am very unhappy.”

“ Are you, Mr. Smith ?” and here she looked so serious—so much more so than the case required, that again he was at a loss : so she continued, “ I am a bad one to apply to in these things ; I can do nothing more than grieve with you. If Mrs. Lambert could—”

“ Mrs. Lambert ! it is not so bad as that, Bessie :” said Henry, now smiling in his turn. “ You might think, even the telling you, a tax upon your time.” Bessie looked as though she thought him too hard upon himself ; and she softly uttered something gracious. What the exact words were, he did not know ; and it was too late to inquire, for they had reached the gate ; where the cottager stood waiting with a nosegay in her hand to receive her. So Bessie walked in, and the little wicket closed. It was evident here they were to part ; and at a point when she must think him such a blun-

derer;—proposing questions, which vanished into air. What might he not have said! but he had wasted his time. It seemed hard to him, that not only what was impossible, but even that which was possible, should be denied him. But he was a poor, love-lorn creature—a witless wretch. He had met with one formed to make his happiness: so pure—so true! And thus to leave her, with a question and a confession hovering on his lips. Even Bessie appeared to think his manner strange, and to feel relieved that the gate was between them. And how could he explain with the old woman so near, that the words he had tried to utter were not exactly the freak of a madman, but that he really had wished to know whether the report he had heard of her engagement was true and to explain to her his own peculiar position. But there was no chance for all this to-day: therefore it were as well to tear himself away.

“ We shall meet again; soon, I hope: and then I will explain—perhaps—”

“ Perhaps !” repeated Bessie, as she turned away ; and he heard a little, provoking chuckle in her voice, as she began to converse with the old woman of the cottage.

## CHAPTER X.

O failing human love!  
O light by darkness known!

' And love! earth's love? and CAN we love  
Fixedly, were all things move?'

It is difficult to answer these things. We will follow Horace Clayton; and let matters speak for themselves. He walked straight to Mrs. Atherton's, and rang the bell; for he knew this was the time that Bessie generally paid

her daily visit: so he gave a resolute jerk to the wire;

“Is any body at home?”

“Yes, sir.” And he never felt so much the nervous importance of his visit, as when he followed the servant, with a stately step by step, into the house.

Miss Atherton, and her two younger sisters were seated at the table with their work. Miss Atherton was attempting to lay the foundation for a pair of mittens; her youngest boy had the reel of silk in his hand—her “baby boy,” as she called him, clinging very attractively to the last shew of her juvenility,

Horace looked round the room, seeming to think there was <sup>one</sup> bow more to be made; but Bessie was not there: so he took a chair and seated himself by Miss Atherton. She was looking very pretty—very pretty indeed! so he continued to gaze on her, without once turning to the right or to the left, or taking, for a moment, his eyes off. He had felt provoked that

Miss Smith was absent; and he immediately struck a bargain with himself, that he would be indemnified for her loss, by flirting with her friend: so he said, drawing near her frame:

“What are you doing, Miss Atherton?”

“Setting mama’s mistakes to rights; she has been working here so very funnily.”

“Can I help you? I was once a capital hand at such work; but it was in the days gone bye:—those ‘long—long ago’ days, when as the fables tell us, ‘both birds and beasts could talk like men and boys.’ Shall I help you?”

“I will not trouble you.”

“*Diable!* you are all as cold as charity.” This was said in an aside. But in an aloud, he continued, “I saw you at a distance the other day, Miss Atherton,”—Bessie was with her—“and I wished to overtake you; I wanted to talk with you, and to flirt with you.”

“Not out of doors, Mr. Clayton; in doors you may do as you please: but not out of



doors. I have no idea of giving a small place like this, the privilege of ticketing you and my daughter together, as unscrupulously as they would two gloves in a linendraper's shop."

"Humph!" ejaculated Horace. It was evident his views were mistaken, and his spirits rose some degrees. He was pleased, also, with what Mrs. Atherton had said: he had resolved himself not to be seen walking with the two young ladies on the beach; especially as he had her permission to flirt at home. He had always considered Mrs. Atherton very clever; he thought her now, more so than ever. So he settled himself very comfortably in his chair, and said, drawing some waltzes near him that lay on the table,

"I wish I had brought my flute with me, we might have had a practice."

"I think there will hardly be time;" remarked Mrs. Atherton; "for though you are not to walk with us, we must still have our exercise."

Here Horace took a pinch of snuff. The way he took it did not explain his feelings much, either one way or the other; but he said,

“I have been very cross since I saw you last; and have done nothing but play the flute: practising is a capital employment for a savage temper. Will you play this waltz?”

Mrs. Atherton took the request as meant to herself; and went from her work to the piano.

“How nicely you were served with your myrtle!” observed one of the little girls, who happened to have been at Mrs. Lambert’s party: “we knew what you meant when Bessie threw it down: Catherine, did not we know?”

Miss Atherton smiled: had she laughed she would have spoilt her chance, there was something so forced always in her laugh: but she only smiled: and Horace to cover his slight mortification at the recurring to the circumstance, said,

"Do *you* know the meaning of the word, the myrtle would express?"

"No," said Catherine, looking coquettishly over her frame.

"Should you like to know it?"

Catherine smiled again; but she did not raise her eyes from her work this time.

"When will you come and dine with us?" asked Mrs. Atherton; seeing she might play, or not play, and no one either missed it, or praised it. "Come to us some day this week; and bring your friend."

"Any day: *I* am a disengaged man."

"Why such a stress upon the *I*? Mr. Smith is, surely, too young, to have such an affliction impending over him?"

"Humph!" said Horace; and he took a pinch of snuff with such emphasis, that it seemed to creak as he took it. "What a many fools there are in the world, Mrs. Atherton!"

"Your friend will not thank you. And you?"

“Are a greater: you were going to say.”

“And those who are not fools?” asked Catherine from her work.

“Are rogues. I would rather be a rogue than a fool, any day.”

“The characters are not incompatible.”

Mrs. Atherton was sometimes thrown off her guard, and showed more sense and acuteness than she wished to show. She had found she furthered her own ends more, by people taking her for, what is termed, ‘a quiet, well meaning person’: so she turned off what she had said, by continuing;

“They tell me, Mr. Clayton—for I know nothing—that I am to congratulate you—.”

“On being a rogue or a fool?”

“Now you know what I mean: so it is no use to deny it.”

“I plead not guilty, so far.”

“And how much farther?” asked Catherine, with a look so sweet and attractive that he settled his fate was decided.

"The lady is not far from here," whispered Catherine.

"She is not;" replied Horace, "but who told you?"

"I need not confess," said Catherine.

"Neither will you contradict?"

"I will promise no such thing."

"But you believe it?"

"Can I believe any thing that Mrs. Worth says?"

"Yes, you may; for in this case her words are pearls in a swine's nose. Nasty old woman! I never mince the matter, you see; I always speak my mind. I hate—abuse—love, and propose,—pop!—in the same moment. I can tell in a very short time whether a girl will do as a wife. The judgment of love is intuitive:—a glance—and *c'est fait!* Do not laugh. I speak French so badly, it makes me nervous. I once asked a friend to take a pinch of *fromage*: rather ridiculous;—offering my snuff box at the same time. But to return: with a bow to

Catherine: "a man of discernment has in his own imagination a standard of the object of his love---an unexplained model---the duplicate, to which, exists somewhere. Thus does he wander in the dark, till the light beams from two bright eyes. He hears the tones of the voice---the *laugh*---gaze meets gaze---till the magic blaze is kindled."

"All very true;" interrupted very quietly Mrs. Atherton; "but how does it happen when a man seems to have two models---more attractions than one?" This was asked in her very simple tone.

"Why that," replied Horace, "may lead him into difficulties." He looked at Mrs.

Atherton to see if she meant more than she said. She did not seem even to mean so much as she had said. So Horace, almost talking for his own amusement, continued,

"If a man let himself astray---involves himself in difficulties---once Don Juan, why,

there is no following him : but from this sort of person we pray to be delivered."

It was time to end this episode. The work went on : Horace had a moss rose bud in his button-hole ; he brought it for Bessie : for he had watched it in his garden---a garden where,

" The thorns and the thistles grow broader and higher"

till fit to gather for her. But she was not there : so, in her absence, he presented it to Miss Atherton.

" What a dear little rose !"

" You may accept it, Catherine," said Mrs. Atherton.

She placed it in her dress.

" Will you say, yes, to any question I may ask ?"

" You look too serious," said Catherine.

" Then will you say, no ?"

" That comes to exactly the same thing."

What was he to do ? He had resolved not

to return home a disengaged man; and he would have proposed to twelve girls—a whole jury, rather than fail in his purpose: so he begged Catherine to sing him his favorite song, “Long—long ago.”

“Bessie sings that,” said one of the children.

Horace was always in a scrape: but he ever continued to scramble out, with the same *insouciance* with which he got in: so he turned the leave of the music quickly over;—closed the book suddenly; and told Miss Atherton to choose for him. She did: played a few low chords, and from memory sang the following words:—

You softly spoke---you sweetly smil'd  
 Whilst love seem'd beaming from your eye  
 And this unwary heart beguil'd,  
 And taught this bosom first to sigh  
 But now you scorn my fond emotion,  
 My vows disdain---my sighs reprove  
 Ah, why reject my heart's devotion---  
 Or wherefore teach me how to love?



The wretch, by hope betrayed to anguish.  
 "Still, still from hope demands relief ;  
 Which flatters, while it bids him languish,  
 Which soothes—but yet confirms his grief.  
 So still I seek the loved illusion,  
 Though madness lurk beneath the wile.  
 Oh, then prolong the dear delusion—  
 Still softly speak and sweetly smile.

" Catherine made those words ;" said one of the little girls ; " don't you think them great nonsense. Mr. Clayton ?"

Horace felt, as a fly may be supposed to feel, that is dragged out of a glass of wine, upon the table ; who did not know whether to die, or to recover—to buzz or lie still. He was intoxicated. He could not misunderstand the meaning of the words : they came very much home in themselves, and the plaintive persuasive way in which Catherine had sung them, made them, even, still more pointed. It was dangerous work. He could not mistake his own feelings : he was in earnest ; and surely she must be the same : for though he knew the vanity of man was such, that it would construe

everything into encouragement that is not absolute rejection—yet here was no room to despair or to consider himself mistaken. So he approached his head very close to Catherine's, and an earnest discourse ensued: *sotto voce* on Horace's side, Catherine replying in a voice that all the room might have heard, had they but chosen to have listened.

And it seemed so fortunate, to Horace, that they did not. The children were spluttering together as usual: Mrs. Atherton, with more patience than she generally showed, was settling their trifling dispute for them; so there was no chance, even, of being overheard; and Catherine, in reply to something he had observed, said—

“ I think, Mr. Clayton, there must have been an incipient engagement existing between us.”

What he replied in answer to this was said in a whisper.

“ I will tell mama, if you wish it.”

Again a whisper; and she replied:

“ You need not ask me that question.”

This was, evidently, too much for Horace. he pressed the willing girl to his heart: and turning to Mrs. Atherton, he said:—

“ You see how it is, my dear Madam, I have promised to love and to cherish your sweet laughter: and she has consented to be mine. I am not a man of many words,” here the whole room burst into a laugh—“ well, am I?” he asked, laughing also; for he was too happy to be angry with anything or anybody.

The fair Catherine arose from her seat.

“ You will consent, mama?”

“ Yes, my love, certainly, if you wish it.”

“ And Mr. Atherton?” asked Horace.

“ Mr. Atherton! my dear sir! why Mr. Atherton is nobody.”

At this moment the door opened, and Bessie Smith entered as noiselessly as though she had been a ghost: she glided, rather than walked, into the room.

“ I’ll be reading,” said Horace to himself, snatching up a book.

"I'll be working," thought Catherine, hastily drawing her frame towards her.

"I'll be doing nothing," settled Mrs. Atherton.

"Thou can'st not say, I did it?"

"Here comes Bessie! here comes Bessie!" shouted the delighted children. "Dear Bessie!"

"You need not announce her advent so loudly, my darlings. How do you do, Bessie—where have you been this morning?"

"What a colour you have got, Bessie!" said the children. "How pleased you look, Bessie!"

Bessie smiled.

"A chair for Bessie."

Mr. Clayton placed one: but he did not speak to her; and Bessie hardly seemed to expect it.

"Bessie you look so like your mother to-day!" observed Catherine, merely for something to say; for she could hardly recollect ever having seen Mrs. Smith. Clayton had

resumed his seat: but he looked up, as all were regarding Bessie. Her profile was turned towards him; and never was anything more neatly formed: he thought it very pretty, and the more he looked the more he admired it: so he resolved he would resolutely keep his eyes to his book; at the same moment Mrs. Atherton settled all their looks, by protesting that Catherine knew nothing about it, for that Bessie was not half so good looking as her mother had been, nor ever would be. This was a *non sequitur*; none of the party had ever seen Mrs. Smith, but Catherine, and herself, and Catherine, she maintained could not possibly remember anything about her.

And Bessie sat all the time looking very quiet;—yet so happy—that the children all with one accord, asked her, what made her look so saucy?

“Nothing,” she replied; trying to look serious.

“Where have you been walking, Bessie—and who have you seen?”

Bessie had no idea of disguise.

“ I have been walking up the hill.”

“ And who have you seen ?”

“ Seen ?” repeated Bessie, hesitating but for one moment. “ Seen ? I have seen Mr. Henry Smith.”

Horace took a pinch of snuff here with such an impetus, that it sounded a good shrill squeak as he sniffed it up. He then caught at his hat and stick—hastily pressed Catherine’s hand—dragged Mrs. Atherton’s reel of silk all over the room with him—muttered a suppressed benediction—and exit—much more like a lucifer match, than a reasonable, christian-like creature.

## CHAPTER XI

AND Henry Smith, paying his friend the compliment of an hour's grace, waited dinner for him in vain that day. Where he was he did not know ; what detained him—from the events of his own morning—he did not care. He hoped he himself had not been guilty of taking an undue advantage : he retraced all the circumstances of the case : cross examined himself ; did not forget to state that Bessie had come to him, and not he who had gone out of his road

to go to Bessie---laid the case before the jury of his conscience---and stood honourably acquitted. He had gained everything, and, (not taking his eyes into the consideration) done nothing. This made him happy---as happy as he could be, under the exceedingly perplexed state of his circumstances. He hated himself in giving the fortune that was waiting for him a thought ; and yet, it was surprising even to himself, the vast yearnings he had to possess it, under less arbitrary circumstances.

We will now see him in the solitary little sitting room waiting for the return of his friend indulging in his slippers before a half extinguished fire, warning him as well as it could speak, that it was time to go to rest. The table before him covered with papers and books -

———— “ Next

Lie bills and calculations much perplext,  
 With steam-boats, frigates, and machinery quaint  
 Tinted over them in blue and yellow paint.  
 Then comes a range of mathematical  
 Instruments, for plans nautical and statistical.  
 A heap of rosin, a green broken glass  
 With ink in it.”



Some good pictures hung, in the way that bachelors hang things, round the walls ; whilst the gaps in the shelves shewed there was no tidy hand to replace the books that were dragged out, either to be read or for reference.

“ I’ll no more of it to-night,” he said, and he rose from his chair and stood---of course (for though he is our hero, he was but a man) with his back to the fire. And then he pondered again ; and again saying, “ enough to-night ;” took up a book from the table and read an ode of Anacreon.

It had the desired effect of changing his ideas. At first he was delighted : then disgusted : then delighted again. But Anacreon’s picture of love is not that which can really delight a man who loves one---and that one sincerely ; so Henry put down the book. Yet in spite of his resolve to think no more, he felt restless and unsettled : he was tired of waiting for his companion : he had neither resolution enough to go to bed, nor energy sufficient to sit up. He

stood listening one moment to the beating of his own heart : the next for the expected footsteps of his friend. It was a cold night, though in the middle of Summer---perhaps the cold was peculiar to the 'rook's nest,' hanging as it did, midway between earth and heaven. At all events, cold it was, and the fire got lower and lower ; whilst the remaining candle seemed just preparing to follow the one that had half an hour ago sunk down into the socket. He watched it : and was pleased to have something else to think upon beside his own anxieties.

“ Why can it be ?” he soliloquised—all heroes soliloquise---“ why can it be, that if you take two candles of equal length and weight, and burn them, as you imagine, under similar circumstances, that one of them will always last longer than the other ? Is it like human life ? Two young men start together ; go to the same school--the same college ;—have the same education and the same talent, and are both in sound health—yet one dies before the other—

one lives, after his compeer has long been at rest.

There are unseen draughts---secret springs  
- which not the most learned can comprehend :  
for much as we can perceive, we cannot see  
everything in human nature. The one wastes  
and pines away, why or wherefore we know  
not ; the other survives, and, it may be, lives  
in the memory of man, when his friend, who  
started in life in the same circumstances, is  
gone-- and forgotten."

Henry thought all this, as he looked at the  
candles,--and thought it with a sigh---a sigh so  
deep that one who knew human nature would  
be sure that self and love were both at the  
top and the bottom of it. So he took up a pen  
and a scrap of paper, and wrote the following  
lines : - -

Brightly flashes the wine on the jovial board,  
Brightly glistens the gold in the old miser's hoard,  
Brightly twinkles the star in the far distant west,  
When its silvery beams warn the world to its rest

But jewels far purer than these would I seek,  
For they match not the bloom on my—

*my* / Yes, my ;—in poetry at all events—

my Bessie's fair cheek.  
Her bright rosy lip, and her deep hazel eye,  
Leave the stars---wine---and gold to their destiny.

“The pen's asleep!” he exclaimed, throwing it away. “It will not do at all. I never could write, and---failing in such a subject---I never shall, that is certain.” He looked at the paper---looked at the fire---it is strange the tenderness we all have for our own productions, bad as ever they may be. It was, however, no use to stay up to criticise such trash : so he put the verses in his pocket, and lighted his candle.

At that moment he heard the garden gate swing. He had fancied it twenty times before ; but when it really did open, he could not mistake it. Then came the latch key in the entrance door---a little bustle in the hall---and the next moment---Horace was in the room with his friend.

“ A pretty fellow to keep me waiting dinner !” was Horace’s first salutation. So Henry saw he was in a good humour, whatever had happened. “ Give me a pencil,” was the next thing he stipulated for. “ I have found an idea in my solitary walk home.” A pencil was given him, and he drew a pyramid---and he said, “ the operations of conviviality in its various degrees, may be represented thus.” It was to be supposed he meant to draw a pyramid by what he had before stated : it was as much like that, as anything else ; but he appeared perfectly satisfied with it.

“ Now,” he said, “ see what I am about. The sober moments which immediately succeed to dinner are not the happiest in existence. If you have been worried in the day, the languor, the sense of utter inefficiency, mental and bodily, are dreadful. After a few glasses, you ascend the first step of this, my pyramid, and become what we will call *comfortable*. In this state, you are not much disposed to talk. There

is a tranquil luxury in your feelings, and a reverie comes on, which, if not disturbed, is likely to terminate in sleep. A philosopher seldom passes the point, except in company.

“ But we will proceed, if you please, and my next step,” dotting his pyramid with his pencil, “ leads me to *lively*. Now you will hear talking begin, and the remarks are all smart and pertinent. You see the reasoning power in high perfection, but aided withal by a happy fertility of illustration. This may be considered as a mental aurora, announcing that the sun of fancy is about to rise from the ‘ purple wave.’

“ Wait a little and you shall perceive more fire and colour in the ideas that begin to flow, for the bright sun has risen. We will say now that every one looks *fresh*;—half way, you see, up my pyramid. Now, it is, that those around you grow more eloquent and less logical. The jokes are capital,—in the joker’s estimation: and perceptions tolerably clear, beyond themselves.”

“ What has produced all this amusing flow of ideas ?” asked Henry ; losing the best of it, in puzzling to find the cause which had excited it, and to what it was all to come.

“ Don’t interrupt me, and you shall hear. Stay, stay, where was I ? Nearly at the top. This we will term *very fresh* : stepping up, as you may perceive, from, Sober, Comfortable, Lively, Fresh, to very fresh. Here conversation is more and more highly coloured, eloquence is impassioned, and you are overwhelmed by a flood of talk. You see action suited to the word. Ideas not quite coherent, but language still tolerably distinct and well chosen. Now we have reached the top : what shall we call this stage of the confusion that is around it ?”

“ *Obfuscated.*”

Horace laughed. “ No, neither that nor *Kibosch* will do : it must be plain English. We must e’en have it *Tipsy*. And here we see visible signs of our friends around growing—

*obfuscated*—if you please---and giddy. Gestures very vehement, and epithets much exaggerated; argumentative, but far from rational: words considerably abridged—ideas obscured most lamentably.”

Horace now called for a glass of water—wiped his face, and rested, as a conjuror is wont to do, between the acts of his tricks. Henry hoped he had reached to the end of all this unaccountable quaintness of idea. What was it all for? He kept his patience as well as he could---it was severely taxed, it is true---but he settled, there must soon be an end of it.

“We are now coming down the pyramid,” said Horace with all the coolness in the world.

“You see, I have first marked the turn---*very topsy*---and it is now that you perceive your friends have a taste for music, and are all ready to regale you with a solo. Speeches burst forth in incoherent language; others evincing a tendency to mischief and locomotion. Proud as



peacocks, stout as lions, quarrelsome as London cock sparrows.

This goes on from bad to worse. *Drunk*. Perversely quarrelsome, and stupidly good natured. Dealing much in shaking hands and knocking downs. Balance totally lost, drifting about like ships in a heavy gale. Vocabulary reduced to interjections.

Now you perceive I am travelling very close to the bottom of the scale I have raised. We will call this *stupidly drunk*. Head and constitution topsy-turvy, eyes fixed and glaring, even incapacity of speech and locomotion, accompanied with a tenacious, yet indistinct consciousness of the horrid situation."

"Very well---very well; and there is an end," said Henry, almost feeling sick and dizzy himself at the bare description.

"Just one little trope more, and all is closed. *Dead drunk*. Last scene of all, which ends this strange eventful history! Apoplectic sleep,

and confused dreams of—of every evil, that on waking is sure to perplex you.”

“ And you have seen all this, to-night ?”

“ *No’ t’I know !* as we say in Devon. I have come home, thus early, to escape it : such merry-makers are no company for me : I thought I had turned into a quiet dinner party. I went out sad ; and I come home sad. Shall I make you now a pyramid of love ?” He took the pencil.

“ No, I thank you. It waxes late : let’s to bed ; and talk over the rest when we meet in the morning.”

## CHAPTER XII.

“AND how fares it ?” asked Henry, meeting his friend, after a somewhat prolonged toilet, face to face over the breakfast table the next morning.

Horace had slept himself down into his usual calm and clerical like demeanour ; cool and collected : nothing heated about him but the roof of his mouth ; and two spots, about the size of half-crowns, in the palms of his hands.

“ Well Horace, and what cheer ? How

came such a steady housekeeper as yourself, to fall in with such a lawless set as the Martin-gales? I thought you hardly knew them. Where did you meet?"

"In the street."

"Well?"

"Why, then they asked me to dinner."

"And what was the inducement held out?"

"Champagne."

"Champagne! I never knew you had a fancy that way?"

"Nor have I. I detest it. I merely took it as Mandragora. Did you ever take just one drop too much—medicinally—in that way?"

"Never."

"Then, you have never tasted a real pleasure."

"I doubt it."

"I suppose, from the same idea that Solomon had, that all is vanity?, *All is vanity.*" He looked very serious as he said it: but recovering himself, he continued, "if I had been a man as

rich and as potent as Solomon, I should have liked, as a moral lesson, to have gone through his course of experiments in mirth and jesting and wisdom and love. And probably I should have arrived at the same conclusion, 'I said in my heart, that all is vanity'."

There was a sadness in his tone, that made Henry suspect all had not gone well with him the day before; and yet, whilst doubt often begets more restless thoughts than the certain knowledge of what we fear, for the soul of him he dared not put a question. So he discussed his breakfast instead: eating with much better appetite than Horace, who, however, made an effort to perform his best. But it would not do. So he gave it up, and said,

"Come Hal, give me a little of your sympathy: you only open your mouth to cram it with cold tongue: a little fricaseed if you please—~~come~~<sup>come</sup>; I have something to tell you, if you will but help me out: questions asked—wishes kindly expressed: it was late last night,

so I then let you off"—he had forgotten his pyramid---"to-day, the least thing I can expect, is, your congratulations."

"For what?" The words seemed, in the excited way they were uttered, to come out of the top of Henry's head, they were so high---so agitated. He brought them down a little; and again said, "for what?"

"Guess: it will break no bones to surmise a little, *I sim?* (Devon to wit) guess, a little."

Henry had no guess in him. He felt very sick---very anxious and very unsettled. He could not be deceived; and yet, like a shadow in a glass, the feature of his happiness might in one moment all fade away;---all past hope---all future peace gone, and nothing left for the mind to dwell on, but what *might* have been:—what he had aimed at, coming before him like a flash of lightning, leaving all dark and blasted.

It was no wonder that there should be no more breakfasting for him; what had before

been both seasonable and acceptable, now eat like chopped hay. He trembled like a culprit awaiting his doom—uncertain—miserable. Horace was tired of waiting : so he again said,

“ Come Hal, do set me off : I have much to say : I pray you, ask me some leading questions.”

“ I cannot,” was the reply.

“ Cannot ! I’ll make the best in Gloucestershire know on’t ; I would I were hanged, la, else.” And here he drooped his head so very much in the way of Slender, that Henry’s spirits began in a very small measure to revive. And Horace continued,

“ I fear the recital may make you jealous,” cutting up some crusts of bread, unrelentlessly upon the table cloth, as he spoke.

“ Not a bit,” replied Henry ; and his tongue seemed<sup>h</sup> made of lead, even in uttering these words.

“ I am engaged to be married.”

“ Well ?

“ But to whom ?”

“ Well ?”

“ Well ! It is well ; though it is not to her whom you may suspect.” He spoke with an appearance of mirth ; but Henry, who knew him thoroughly, detected that he was but feigning it,—so obvious was the exertion. But he went on to quote ;—and it was such a strange little *morceau* of Shakspeare that he had hit upon—

Eton—I came yonder at Eton, to marry Mistress Anne Page”

“ Well,” said Henry, and this time with a smile, for he now knew there was something wrong. “ Well, and the ‘lubberly boy’?”

“ If I did not think it Anne Page, would I might never stir !”

“ And was it not ?”

“ No.”

Henry could now well have said, “ Then upon my life you took the wrong.” but he did not say it. He was content to wait for what



Horace would say next; breathing to himself—  
‘sweet Anne Page!’ So again left to proceed  
in his account as he best liked, Horace branched  
off into a prologue—or apology, and he said,

“I have been settling in my mind, love to  
be, a *conscious impersonation of an unconscious  
ideality*: that is to say, we have a pre-conceived  
idea of what we should love; and we attach all  
the qualities of this idea to the living image  
which comes the nearest to it, though the per-  
son, I grant you, may not have a quarter of the  
qualities of the idea.”

“To wit—the ‘lubberly postmaster’s boy,’”  
thought Henry to himself. And his friend con-  
tinued,

“Now it is indispensable to be in love with  
somebody: therefore we are always imperson-  
ating an idea: and as we find more of its qua-  
lities in one image than in another, or see them  
more vividly in a present image than in an  
absent one, why, we may gain the character of

being inconstant — inconstant, as *you* may call it."

"Not in the least," said Henry, with the most re-assuring sort of hurry—"not in the least—very far from it—pray do not mention it."

"I say, even in this case, I am constant to the original idea, of which I have changed the impersonation—that is all."

"You know best, certainly," said Henry.

"I *do* know best," rejoined Horace, talking himself into being satisfied with what he had done. "I ought to know best: you might have chosen Miss Bessie Smith for me!" Good gracious! how Henry's heart beat; but he said nothing. "Now I am convinced, the path I have taken will prove to be the right. Catherine Atherton possesses all the attractions and qualifications of the gentle Bessie, and more; you know I loved Bessie for the energy of her mind, hid under so modest—so unpretending a 'meanour.'"

“ I know,” said Henry.”

“ Now Catherine has this very same energy, and is always as clear and ready as noon day with it. Have I your consent to the change, *mon ami* ?”

“ Indeed you have.”

“ Do you congratulate me ?”

“ Indeed I do.”

“ Will you come to my wedding ?”

“ Indeed I will : and it will be no bad lot for you, my dear friend, if you find yourself as happy in your married life, as I wish you to be.”

It was not long a secret in the little village of Sandycliff, that Mr. Clayton had proposed to Miss Atherton ; and strange to say had been accepted. It now became the property of all to discuss the matter, and for each to give an opinion ; usually ending in the same decision, that he had done a very foolish thing, and she by no means a wise one ; but this was *their own look out*. Should they not rather

have said, it was every one's look 'out, to prevent so unadvised a step being taken.

It is strange how tenacious the world is of intruding in some points, and how very intermeddling it is in others. A pair of poor lovers always pass muster: nobody envies them—nobody wishes to take anything from them: they are allowed to do what they like, as patients are indulged just before they die; for lost they will be—therefore what matters?

And what has thus hoodwinked a pair sharp enough to take care of themselves, in every other respect? The world suppose it to be love, and call it such—a fever of the brain—typhus—scarlet—all the fevers conjoined in one—symptoms—whose name is Legion.

“That wonderful passion which to be defined is impossible, because no words can reach the real strange nature of it; they only know it who inwardly feel it—it is called love!” This was Sir Philip Sidney's idea of it. We

will have also another's—"Love—a flattering mischief, that hath denied aged and wise men a foresight of those evils that too often prove to be the children of that blind father ; a passion that carries us to commit errors with as much ease as whirlwinds remove feathers, and begets in us an unwearied industry to the attainment of what we desire." So says the good old Isaac Walton.

And the afflicted know all this they are expected to do ; therefore when once in an unlucky moment they have committed themselves so far as to enlist under love's banner, they counterfeit the passion, ashamed to say they are not so bad as might have been expected.

At all events those who see with their eyes opened, and not through a glass darkly, can perceive these subjects are in no one single way to be envied. It may be observed, on the other hand, that as Solomon says—"He that considers the wind shall never sow." Yet the

doom for life assuredly does require a little more consideration than young people are ever disposed to give it. But to be young, is avowedly to be a fool; and not only a fool, but opinionated—obstinate—preferring self will, to ‘wise saws,’ visions to ‘modern instances;’ flanning the self esteem, in proportion to what it loses of the public plaudit; thus fencing off the shorn lamb, nor feeling the depth that poverty (the effect of love’s imprudence) has in sinking the consequence. Watchfully the world looks on; and with an encouraging—nay a jocose word—will lure the devoted pair still surer to their doom, till the deed is done. Then the foolish couple have to take their position in the world: of course they fix it too high; which only still surer helps the descent: and year after year it is down—down—and down they go—

“The serpent folds of fate,  
Resistless winding round their hapless state.”

There is no punishment like giving them the

scope—the rope—of their own untamed inclinations. Fresh from the parent roof—where all has been provided for her use—everything seems easy to the trustful girl. What does she want besides the husband of her choice? very little indeed. Better is the dinner of herbs where love is, than the stalled ox; for she little dreams how fond men are of a joint—it is better to her mind than all the wealth the world, without it, can bestow. The picture takes her to a pretty cottage; all things in place, without the benefit of hands: the viands coming and going, as represented in the fairy tales. A cheap cook—dear at any price—never takes its stubborn stand, in the sketch imagination draws of love and a cottage. And what gentleman is ever perfectly content, whose dinner—and dinner appointments—are not served to his liking.

The domestic economy is the first castle which, in a small way, is kicked down after matrimony. Few young wives know how to

manage their servants ; they expect from them either too much or too little. The husband handles them in a much more summary manner : he sends them all—relentlessly—as our sub-hero would say—to the *diable* ; not recollecting that he cannot send his beefsteaks after them, to be grilled in the same off-hand head cook sort of manner.

Here then is the first clog in the marriage wheel ; and the blest pair find, with some surprise, and a little bit of mutual distrust the one with the other, that matrimony does not work so smoothly as they had contemplated. And it is now, they find, a little oil would be no bad expedient—shall we use so vulgar a term—to grease the wheel ; to order post horses, and to be off to Paris, Berlin, Rome ; each teaching us to value that which we have left at home. But no : your poor married folks must keep their noses ever on the grind-stone—knock—knock—knock. There is no redress, they must be content to leave themselves, (unless great



good sense come unexpectedly to their aid,) looking daggers — talking nettles — eating thistles —reposing on thorns: a sad change from the programme they had made; for so truly as money has been said to be the root of all evil, so as surely is the want of it the touchstone of married felicity. There are cares and vexations quite enough, pains and labours, which no single person can foresee, (and so far right it should be so), even with money to pay the piper. And where money is not, so much the more are all these cares encreased. There is, perhaps, no dungeon like the open sky, when it looks down upon us under the full committal of a foolish act. With liberty to roam abroad at will, carrying our folly with us, inextricably mixed and involved up with it; no hope—no other prospect left, but to do the best we can: and we smile at the idea, in the narrow scope that is left us to do it in: yet leaving space for weary days and restless nights; dreams of joy, which pass like shadows over the mind that has

been, even, by itself betrayed—caught by false pictures; as unlike reality, as light to dark. We pity those who have to begin to unpaint these soft illusions.

## CHAPTER XII.

It was impossible for Henry, or any one else to say, how soon Horace Clayton began to repent of his hasty engagement. He laughed very hysterically whenever he spoke of the subject; talked of bliss extreme—of love—of joy—the respectability of a married man, yet cast a latent hope that Mr. Atherton, in prudence, would help him out of such an unprofitable scrape, as he had thus untowardly thrown himself into. He little dreamt what an indolent father ~~he~~, with eight children to

feed every day, and five of those children girls. With a very moderate head at calculation, to get one 'off the loaf,' as he was wont to call it, was, at home, a decided benefit: and as to the prospects which busy people troubled their heads about, they would all unfold very well in the end.

Idle people leave all their work to fate. 'They have heard that there is "luck in leisure:"' this gives them many a peaceful moment: whilst if Fate tricks them and leaves them sprawling on the ground, she only gets one more bad name; they put their soft self-indulging habits against it, and come off, at the measure of their private calculation, the victor.

Now Mr. Atherton was that kind of man who, when he had once said a thing, be it what it might, nothing could ever turn him from it. He would not act upon it; for he rarely acted at all—he left that to Mrs. Atherton; but when he had once advanced a point, touch upon that point when you would, you could not swerve

him from it. ' How Mrs. Atherton had brought him to the impression, no one could tell : he had once said that Horace Clayton would be a good match for any girl ; and he had no idea of changing this assertion, when he heard it was his daughter's luck to have gained him. Vain, therefore, was it for Horace to walk up and down his room, and look unsettled when he paid him the respect of a visit in his library, on Catherine's observation, that dear Pa would be so happy to see him : it did nothing. Jokes showered out of the father's mouth, instead of the pearls and diamond words of care and caution, joined to a little gentlemanlike inquiry into his circumstances, which the intended son-in-law had every reason to expect from him.

" You'll do very well my friend, very well. I never knew a parson who did not : they are sure, in some way or another, to handle the loaves and fishes, and are known to have nine lives like the cat. A young pair such as you !" (here a slight writhed from Horace to think of

the long up hill before him) "cannot fail of doing well. I wish you luck with all my heart; and a house-full of children: happy is the man who has his quiver full of them, he shall not be ashamed to speak with his enemy in the gate."

"Perhaps not exactly ashamed," replied Horace, "but it is a mighty responsibility to look forward to, on a small income: and no very pleasant thing for your enemy to get hold of. I am sure I often ask myself, how we are ever to live?"

"Tut, tut, my good fellow; never ask these questions; do the lilies of the fields ever ask them? No; they know better. They never proceed to such personalities. No one is justified in doing it; for myself, I should as soon think of flying, as asking you such a question."

"I wish you would, sir."

"Not at all—not at all. No man more than myself admires your candor and open hearted-

ness—but I have not the slightest idea of taking advantage of it.”

“ But wouldn’t it be more the thing—wouldn’t it give me more confidence, if you did, sir, enquire a *leetle* into the position in which I stand. I should be grieved to the heart, were I not able to support your daughter in the way that she has been brought up.”

“ To be sure you would—to be sure ; but don’t let that distress you ; fine feathers make fine birds. Catherine is as well able to work as any girl I ever saw ; and you have shewn your sense in selecting her ; she’ll make the best parson’s drudge of any one amongst them.”

Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! then there was nothing to be done. And vain was it for Horace to expect it. He had some agreeable moments with Catherine, it is true, and the privilege of offering her his arm in their walks ; but even this soon took the character of the jail dress

they put on to mark culprits from their fellow men; for his conscience was ever reminding him, that he never had been justified, whatever his feelings were, in so having appropriated her to himself.

With Mrs. Atherton he had as little chance of being helped out of his scrape as by her husband; for she let no opportunity ever pass of showing the pride she took, that what had merely seemed but a common flirtation, should have turned into such a glorious *dénouement*; forgetting in the triumph it gave her, of having as she termed it, provided for one of her girls, that she had better have found this provision in the grave, than to have rested it on the idle preference of an hour—backed by a headlong engagement.

Engagement. To all whom it concerns: for, however foolish we write, we wish not to write in vain—so let us touch upon this matter of engagement—tramels—a sort of ready made harness—a hat left to keep a place—whilst an



inward proviso is, perhaps made, that it is merely to go on, till something better presents itself. But let it always be recollected, that in making every thing—but a pair of stockings—how much easier it is *to do*, than it is to *undo* again. Whilst in the mean time there is a misery entailed on all; on those who really love, and on those who do not love; to the latter it is a thralldom; whilst the former find they have linked themselves to a creature, who does not belong to them, but on whom their happiness—their well being depends; and yet the etiquette of society, keeps this creature, excepting at certain stated intervals, away from them. If the affianced mixes too readily in society, it is, where they are not, an affront offered to the existing engagement. And what right have they to keep this dearly beloved at home, unless they can be there themselves to amuse her or him.

It is a bad thing altogether, take the ghost's word. Let it be, to marry or not to marry,

*that* is the question: and let all who seek their own happiness, keep quit of long engagements. Vain is it to expect the friends will help you to be rid of it; for under many circumstances they will not. If the father wishes to interfere as it is considered, the mother talks him over, and tells him not. She knows the trouble it has cost her to bring the match about: and she is aware that other mothers know as well as herself the pains that she has taken; *au cou-vert* it is true; but dog knows dog—thief knows thief; and she has no idea that all she has done is to end in disappointment, under a meddling interference as to consequences. •

We must here take leave to state, that Mrs. Atherton was a very different person from Mrs. Smith; but mothers are mothers all the world over; they will teach their young birds to fly—their kittens to catch mice, and we see no means of preventing them. It is their nature—and so it will ever be to the end of the chapter.

/

‘ Now, human nature is a very clever thing, and a useful; did it not sometimes, like a clumsy weaver, entangle its own web, and mar the perfection it would wish to further. Mrs. Smith was one, who put her daughter aside, and acted for her; and would have done so had she twenty daughters, and all with more obstreperous wills than her gentle Bessie dear, could ever have. Her arrangement—in its beau ideal, was to keep her child from the world, and from all talk of love; to select the person it would suit her to marry—to win this person—to bring him to her feet; and then to sit down contented in her age, to watch the happiness, the prosperity, springing from a well assorted union.

Mrs. Atherton’s *programme* was differently constructed, but all tending to the same end—marriage. And of this her talk had been from the time her child was ten years old; ever ending each discourse with the frightful bugbear conjured up, what should she do with

five daughters, supposing none of them were ever to marry! So that no blame should attach to her in so momentous a concern, she was ever moving about from one watering-place to another; ever promoting everything for the young folks that was going on; whilst no one suspected from the quiet mode she had of setting to her work, the under current that was carried on,—the scolding poor Catherine got, if she failed to make the most of every advantage brought to her hands, or the rating from her sisters, as to how they could ever expect to get married, if Catherine did not make haste and get off before them.

So the day she was engaged—really engaged to Mr. Clayton, was a gala among them. Catherine had accomplished her task: vain was it therefore for Horace to catch at the straw of his deficiency of income; settling when too late that he had not enough to marry upon. He had a house—a profession—he must take care of his wife, and they had no

idea of letting him off. So Catherine had now nothing to do, but to look forward to her wedding; whilst the sister, next to her in age, was decided as old enough to bring out: her hair was cut and dressed, she was told to hold herself upright, had a new bonnet, and bade adieu to the school-room, slammed the door in her governess's face, and took her place in society, to talk as well as the best of them.

But though many by-standing mamas saw well into the whole working of the scheme—the *sell* that had taken place—Horace could tell little of the careful approximation of things which had brought about an event, he hoped, with the most ludicrous expression of face, was all for the best. He could not follow the little strokes of diplomacy from Mrs. Atherton that had all taken effect: he laughed at her odd ways—fancied her clever; and so she was; but in a different way to that in which he had settled it. He had no idea that she wished Catherine married; it was the last

thing in the world he would have given her credit for. She sneered so openly at mamas wishing their daughters married: that he had never been more surprised in his life, than by gaining her consent to his proposal: he had depended on her care to keep him from a scrape; and he now felt very like a madman, allowed to take his will, without the draw back of a straight waistcoat.

Not that the amazement in which the whole concern had put his thoughts, was made in any way manifest by his actions: if he was restless and solicitous, it was kept within himself, unless betrayed by an occasional burst of his opinions to his friend. But he was soon again under due regulation; and no way unwilling to put the sweets of a pretty girl's society, against the bitters of not knowing exactly, when she became his wife, how he was to provide for her. So Horace and his love were always seated near each other at the evening parties; and in the bye ways and high ways,

were as surely to be seen walking together all the mornings; talking very agreeably, it was to be hoped; but looking very much, as though they were under the form of a quarantine. •

It is an ill wind that blows no one good; and it would have been a sad wind here: as it was, it proved a favorable gale for Henry, and promised well to waft him—all blindly as he went—to his destined and much desired haven. Thrown upon his own resources, and being much better suited to the Lambert's quiet ways, than his friend Horace had ever been considered, who had always seemed to Mrs. Lambert, in contradistinction to what she thought a young gentleman ought to be, very much like a squib or a lucifer match; so Henry found himself often making the fourth of their calm domestic circle: talking learnedly with the dominie, whilst he watched Bessie's kind and modest ways; and saw enough to decide that he must marry Bessie, however diametri-

cally his lot would run to the one that was chalked out for him.

The difficulty was, in deciding the best way to act. That Bessie loved him, he did not doubt: he had never asked her the question, it is true; neither did he intend to ask it, till he had laid the whole affair before his mother: though, like a very dutiful son, he had resolved to marry his beloved at all events, whatever her opinion was on the subject: to seek his own fortune, and to let his uncle's money go in the course the will directed; unless his man of business could make for him some amicable arrangement. It was a relief so to decide: and he, therefore, set about writing to his mother on the subject.



## CHAPTER XIII.

AND when the letter arrived, full well did the mother know—ay, even before she broke the seal—such were her intuitive feelings—that her boy's mind was made up to take its own course ; and that her own fiat was fixed for trouble or woe, care, and new found anxiety. It was now she would look back to the deed she had done in her youth—her unnatural descent from where she stood, to please her own inclination. Like

the rest of the world, she overlooked the good, the kind husband she had, to fix her mind solely on the bad:—

“ Oh, wise was he, the first who taught  
This lesson of observant thought,  
That equal fates alone may dress  
The bowers of nuptial happiness :  
That never where ancestral pride,  
Inflames, or affluence rolls its tide,  
Should love's ill omenced bonds entwine,  
The offspring of an humble line.”

And Lucy would never have done it again—no—not for twenty hearts as kind as John Smith's heart had ever been to her. A weary warfare had been carried on within her own breast ; clinging to refinements, her good sense told her, suited not with her homely lot: shrinking from contingencies this lot entailed. Too high for the low, too low for the high, she found herself alone : a creature stared at—a bird escaped, as it were, from its kind, to be pecked at—jeered at—as having strayed from the shelter of its own proper nest. Lucy was rarely seen abroad ; and no wonder at it. And

Now were her children growing up, and they would like to take their places in the world. Alas! their best place was in the back parlour by their mother's side. They were amiable girls; and she must trust to their good sense to give up the world, as she had given it up. And yet it was but a forlorn prospect for them; and Lucy sighed—smote her breast—looked pale, perplexed and dejected.

And then her boy! and she stood with his letter in her hand, dreading to break the seal: her eyes up raised, and so much thought, that branching off here and there, seemed like a dream, bringing forebodings sharper than any words could bring, and which cut the poor Lucy's heart in twain:—she, the devoted wife—the exemplary mother, stood blaming herself for her first—her thoughtless sin;—the simplicity mixed up with it, claiming even pity from her own soft heart.

And then her good sense cleared all away, before even those close at hand—her husband—

her children—or her servants—could detect that she had any thought ever to plague her: so these fits of remorse always ended the same, namely, in her deciding, that there are subjects on which the less that is thought of them the better. It ruffled a disposition in all else so calm: it was a mistake she had made; discovered too late to rectify it; but never too late to be submissive under it and to bear it.

And the letter. She loved his writing, but it always gave her a pain: it was from one she had unwittingly injured in disgracing herself, his mother. Whilst youth and beauty lasted, there was a romance attending the history of her love; but time, instead of carrying away the evil impression, seemed but to bring it more forcibly home: for pride comes with years: few young people have pride: it takes the place of vanity; and when youth, beauty, and vanity are gone, there is still much left to feed this pride upon. Noctitude—position—children—even the way the accumulation of

years are carried—the scarcity from grey hairs—and then the very beauty of them.

But Lucy had nothing to be proud of, but the love that still kept its place for her in Johnny's heart; and the pride—the painful pride—she could not but feel in her children. And there stood the mother, her boy's letter still in her hand—unopened.

“What cowardice!” she said, twisting it about, every way but breaking the seal, “I know it all—I knew it from the first. He will not marry—his uncle's gift quite thrown away, leaving him dependent on his father.”

And this was a prospect for him, to which it pained her to look forward: her husband's idea of giving, so very different to what her Henry's would be of receiving. She knew the painstaking toil it had cost, to save the little they had saved; the care and frugality it required to keep up a competency under the uncertainty of trade; and the trouble it had ever been, even to her, to see the colour of her husband's

money. She knew too well how her own applications had been met, not to be very uneasy as to the result of her son's. She had never forgotten the first time she had asked him for money—a husband so kind to her in every thing else.

“Money, my dear!” he replied, I have got none.”

She thought he was in jest; but he became quite serious, took out a few shillings from his pocket—gave them to her one at a time, impressively begging her to take care of them.

On receiving them from him, she had said,

“Were it not better for you to make me an allowance, John, and then I shall know what I may spend, and be able to regulate my expenses accordingly.”

It seemed a strange idea to him; and he replied,

“You speak as though I were Lord Mayor of London, my dear: expenses may do very well for Miss Aubrey, but you must have no

expences. There would not be much money made, if people had expences.

“ But I must have clothes.”

He looked at her dress, as much as <sup>to</sup> say she had them.

“ And how long must these few shillings last ?” had asked Lucy with an affected pout, coming round to her natural playfulness of manner.

“ What a foolish question,” he replied, with no laugh in him where money was concerned — “ How long must it last ? as long as it can to be sure.”

So Lucy had learnt her lesson : and she now fretted over what her dear boy might have to learn in the same manner. And again the dart rankled in her heart ; and again she put the question to herself—why—why had she married so much beneath her ?

Thus brooded the mother over her boy's letter—still unread. Feeling herself, by anticipation, all the rubs—the storms—which in giving up the good which fortune had allotted him, must

fall on his unsheltered head. There are sensibilities which neither time nor circumstances can ever wear away. She knew what she had gone through to blunt her down to what she then was: and could she expect that her child could ever be thus tamed;—would not his feelings be but rendered more acute by each successive blow—sensitive to the very last—struggling with adversity—of all arrows the most barbed! piercing the pained heart with unrelenting force; bleeding—struggling on through keen words and anguish, to sustain, after all the struggle—nothing but a poor man's paltry existence.

Lucy was in low spirits. The heart ache is a disease, and often comes as unlooked for as the head ache. We all are subject to this ailing, more or less: finding all our circumstances the same as they were the moment that a cheerful spirit left us. It is a subject that eludes enquiry: and a physician who could find out a remedy, would make his fortune. Bile—bile! exclaim to the echo, a thousand



readers. We grant you, it may be so: but when we have bilious attacks, which lay us quiescent and low, there is no sign then of this rabid state of our mental faculties. No; the evil is put off till some day when we get up, thinking to go on as happily as the last day has left us; and instead, we find a cloud spread over all.

For ourselves, we have been married so long we forget what single people feel under this malady: with us, the first symptom is, the house is not so clean or so neat as we could wish it; and as this is a monomania on our parts, the housemaid stands up stoutly and defends herself on the first aspersion of her character: then the dinner is to be ordered, and then all goes wrong; for who can possibly eat anything the house affords, under such deplorable sensations. Then there are the rude children to control—so healthy and so boisterous! and eke the happy tempered husband—a temperament which takes the character of carelessness when all else goes wrong: even the

dog might learn to wipe his feet: and the cat not to commit herself by executing such uncalled for opera antics. In a word, all goes contrariwise; and cares, like flies, feed on the fester of this our own morbid temperament.

Nothing could be worse for poor Lucy than Henry's letter on a day like this; and she twisted and turned it about, half resolved to put it by unopened. But this was at variance with her general creed—know the worst, and face it. So Lucy broke the seal; and read—if reading it could be called; hurrying on to know all she had to fear at once. And when she reached the end, she found it not so bad as she expected; bad enough—but not so bad. It was visionary and eccentric; a certain wildness running through the whole, yet bearing evidences that it was not written in utter thoughtlessness; there were plans drawn for the future—desires reined in, and a promise—a solemn promise he would do nothing hastily; joined to a wish expressed that his mother would, at least, bear patiently the trouble he must be to her, and that she

would induce his father to overlook his deviation from the course laid down for him.

He spoke plainly of the path he meant to pursue: to endeavour to make arrangements with the Executors of his late uncle's will: and if this failed—for he knew little of the law—he must depend on his own abilities for his success in the world: he would not be the first man—nor the last who had kicked aside his luck, and been his own stepping stone to fortune. Heaven knew he wanted little but the object of his choice.

And calmly soothing to the soul was here the picture he drew of the gentle Bessie and the home of his desires—its unobtrusive charms—its soft influence—beguiling him of all care and regret for the income he had so voluntarily given up—independence that would lure him from her he loved; buying up the heart, paying his way into every empty pursuit and pleasure—herding in crowds—jostling at sights—lounging in cares that spring from artificial wants—temptations lurking under specious

ways—we gain the object of our eager search—and find ourselves betrayed—self respect lost—usefulness—love—purity—all given up for unceasing strife in the warfare of the world—a warfare miscalled pleasure.

He gave it up willingly, he wrote, this false career, for habits of reflection and a cottage. What was money after all, he asked, beyond the moderate sum he required? the glow-worm's light to lead the world to detect the insect—the grub he was. "Pardon me, my mother," he said, "we are very low you know: by then blazen to the gaping world this wliness." He knew, he continued, pretty well what this world was. He had seen some as plebeian as himself, try to win it by their wealth—lured on by the hope of power—and pressing to its attainment, blind to all the sneers and jests of the deceitful crew who fattened on the means taken to secure this hoped for elevation: trusting in the present, aspirant of the future, armed, in conscious insignificance, with our wealth well laid on—content

to know that this is what we are worshipped for, instead of for ourselves.

This failing us by some unforeseen event, the mask is at once removed, and scorn and pride now stand revealed and make the creature know his place—a place not with them—the *élite* of the land. Hopes, are now found to have been reared on sand: the edifice is tumbled down—vanity in ruins—and the low born buried in the fall.

“It’s for all this we want mouey, mother to dazzle the world. Fancy my doing it wit a wife I did not love! should I not be fr better the husband of Bessie Smith, and living in a cottage?”

Here the mother laid down the letter and did not know what to think: and this was a point gained. So she read on; and came to a description of the charmer who had won her boy’s heart.

“A graceful and symmetrical figure: not tall, but inclining thereto: not thin, but just so much the reverse as indicates perfect health

and evenness of temper ; but without infringing on grace. A high and thoughtful forehead, dark brown hair hanging in graceful ringlets : dark brown eyes—such eyes ! suffused with the rosy essence of celestial light. Lips and teeth such as painters fancy, and poets see in dreams : a smile that realises Petrarch's idea,

‘ Il lampeggiar del angelico riso,  
Che solea aprire in terra un paradiso’—

A voice so soft—so sweet—so full—so clear, that to hear it—and it is not often you do hear it—is just to imagine an Angel speaking.”

Lucy saw, in a moment, the thing was done : and that if the young lady's friends did not take care of her interests, there was little chance left of any thing presenting itself to take care of her son's. But she hoped—a sort of forlorn one—that they would see the necessity of preventing so romantic a scheme ; for if there had been any money on her side the question, she was sure Henry would not have forgotten to have mentioned it. So she could only rest her hopes in the enemy's camp—

“Hopes!” she said repeating the word, in thought, to herself—“it must be a bad business when the mother hopes for the downfall of her child’s best happiness.”

There was little else in the letter but quotations, all to support the cause. One of them saying—“There is this difference between those two temporal blessings, health and money: money is the most envied, but the least enjoyed; health is the most enjoyed, but the least envied. And this superiority of the latter is still more obvious when we reflect that the poorest man would not part with health for money, but that the richest would gladly part with all their money for health. And what, dearest mother, would my health be to me, with my happiness (which is my best health) all gone?” Lucy did not know. She wished he would not put to her so painful a decision. “What would you have been,” he asked, “had they prevented your marrying as you wished?”

“Much better off,” replied Lucy, in a mo-

raent. But her knowledge of what it was to marry imprudently only added to the entanglement of the dilemma. And after all, it was not what *she* thought of it, but what his father thought. "Oh, misery thy name is mother!" sighed Lucy, rubbing her hands together, in a quick way she had when she knew not what course to pursue. And Lucy had pretty manners about her of gentility and gentle birth;—she piqued herself on them—because they cost her nothing; and they pleased John Smith; though he hardly knew why he was pleased. He loved his Lucy, for she had such merry—such winning ways. He might have said with Wordsworth, had he been poetical, which he decidedly was not—

"Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth  
Of all thy goodness."

For he knew how much of his happiness, and even his prosperity he had owed to this. And Lucy knew her power, for what *wife* does not?" and she repeated to herself:—



“ Make not an ell by trifling in thy woe.  
If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains ;  
If well, the pain doth fade, the joy remains.’

And Lucy was not going to flinch at the moment her powers were required. The mode, she took to make her husband less repugnant to her son's schemes, we must leave for the next volume.

END OF VOL. II.





